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Engraved for the History of Count Struensee.

Balthasar Münter

A

# FAITHFUL NARRATIVE

OF THE

# CONVERSION AND DEATH

OF

# COUNT STRUENSEE,

Late PRIME MINISTER of DENMARK;

Together with

LETTERS of his PARENTS to Him, and alſo a LETTER of his own; wherein he relates how he came to alter his SENTIMENTS of RELIGION.

Publiſhed by D. MUNTER,

An EMINENT DIVINE, who was ordered by the KING to prepare him for Death.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

# THE HISTORY

OF

# COUNT ENEVOLD BRANDT,

From the Time of his Impriſonment to his Death.

Together with two ANONYMOUS LETTERS, found in his Pocket-Book, wherein he was forewarned of what happened to him Four Months after; and likewiſe an EXACT COPY of his SENTENCE.

The Whole tranſlated from

THE ORIGINAL GERMAN.

Embelliſhed with the Heads and Coats of Arms of both the unhappy COUNTS.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

## OF THE

# TRANSLATOR.

*MOST accounts which are given of converſions of hardened ſinners, are drawn up with more enthuſiaſm than reaſon, and are too frequently embelliſhed with declamations, tales, dreams, and other inſignificant trifles; ſo that Chriſtians, who are better acquainted with the true ſpirit of our divine religion, muſt be offended by them; and others, who are no friends of religion, will certainly turn them into ridicule, and harden themſelves in their unbelief and immorality. The Tranſlator took the original of this book*



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*into his hand with prepoſſeſſions of this kind; but he found himſelf agreeably deceived, and thought it, after an attentive reading, capable of promoting the cauſe of true religion and real virtue, for both which he is not aſhamed to profeſs himſelf a warm advocate. With this view he undertook the tranſlation of it, fearing that in this, as well as in all other nations, there are but too many whoſe principles of religion and morality are ſimilar to thoſe of Struenſee, and who indulge themſelves, according to their ſtations and opportunities, full as much as he did, in every paſſion and vice which proved his ruin.*

*There is one thing which muſt recommend this account to the particular attention of the reader; and that is, its authenticity: for there is not the leaſt doubt in this reſpect, which the Tranſlator could not engage to ſatisfy, if it was required; but he truſts, that a candid peruſal of the work itſelf will afford ſufficient evidence of its being genuine.* D. Munter, *who is the undoubted Author of the account concerning Struenſee, is an eminent Divine,*

*and Rector of one of the principal German churches at Copenhagen; and the character he bears is ſufficient to eſtabliſh its veracity. The ſame muſt be ſaid of the Hiſtory of Count Brandt, which was written by* D. Hee. *Theſe clergymen were ſpecially appointed by the King of Denmark, to attend the two reſpective ſtate priſoners; and therefore the Engliſh reader is deſired to remove all unfavourable impreſſions, which are generally annexed to publications of gaol ordinaries.*

*As to the tranſlation, the Tranſlator owns, that it would be the higheſt preſumption in him to pretend to any elegance of ſtyle; he being a Foreigner, who, but a few years ago, was entirely unacquainted with the Engliſh language. He hopes, therefore, the candid Engliſh reader, who is maſter of his native tongue, will overlook the faults he may here happen to meet with.—He further declares, that though he is ſure he has not wilfully miſtaken the original, which he may be ſuppoſed to be in ſome meaſure*

*a maſter of, from his education and profeſſion, yet he has, according to the rule of Horace, not tranſlated word for word; and many places where the good Doctors appeared to him a little declamatory, and too prolix in explaining ſpeculative doctrines, he has partly left out, and partly abridged; and he is now, after the whole is finiſhed, ſo far from thinking that he has done wrong in this reſpect, that he rather wiſhes he had left out a great deal more. Nevertheleſs, every thing of importance is tranſlated, and thoſe paſſages which are Struenſee's own words are, together with his letter to* D. Munter *and all other letters through the whole book, tranſlated* verbatim; *and the Engliſh reader, who is wholly unacquainted with the language of the original, and therefore enabled to peruſe the tranſlation* only, *may rely upon his reading a faithful one.*

## D. MUNTER's PREFACE.

MANY reaſons have induced me to relate the ſalutary reformation of Count Struenſee. He has made much noiſe in the world. Every thing that is written about him is read with eagerneſs. Perhaps this account may be peruſed with utility, and even excite the attention of thoſe who are of the ſame way of thinking as Struenſee formerly was, to reflect ſeriouſly on religion and morality. He himſelf wiſhed that thoſe, who through him were ſeduced to a contempt of religion and morality, or were only miſled in their notions of religion and virtue, might be made acquainted of his return to truth and better ſentiments, and of the manner in which he was reformed. He hoped

hoped that by this means, thoſe bad impreſſions might be effaced, which he had made upon their minds.——Laſtly, his converſion will reconcile him again to the virtuous, whom his principles and his example might have offended.

That I may the better convince my readers, of the truth of what I relate, I have choſen to give an account of every ſingle interview I had with him. I never went to him unprepared. I meditated on every ſubject firſt, and then wrote it down. As ſoon as I came home, I entered in my journal what had happened and what he ſaid, and wherever I have introduced him ſpeaking, it is as near as poſſible in his own words.

Some things which I relate may be looked upon as trifling, but ſenſible readers will oftentimes find the character of a perſon placed in a ſtronger light by theſe trifles, and then they ceaſe to be ſuch, and do not deſerve this name.

The

The books I gave from time to time to the Count, and which he perufed with attention, filled up many vacancies in my inftruction. They prepared him for that which followed, and enlightened his underftanding more in one month, than by mere converfation could have been done in twelve.

How the account given by Struenfee himfelf in his own writing arofe, I have related in the courfe of the narrative itfelf. But is it true that he wrote it himfelf? His hand-writing is well enough known in Denmark, the paper he wrote upon was given him by his judges, every fheet was numbered and figned by them, and could reach no other perfons hands but his.—But have I dictated to him the contents? I declare that it fully can be proved, that he, during my abfence, filled up thofe fheets, which were marked, and were given him one by one, and were delivered up again in the fame manner. But is what he has drawn up, and which I publifh here, a true account,

count, is it agreeable to the original? Whoever entertains doubts of this kind, may inſpect the original itſelf, which is in my poſſeſſion, or may take it along with him for a time, ſufficient to compare it with the copy. I thought it neceſſary to mention all theſe particulars, becauſe I know, how little the narrative of a clergyman, concerning the converſion of a deiſt, is credited by thoſe, whoſe party he has left. They always are ready to ſay: It is all impoſition. However, they certainly will not be able to prove it in this inſtance. If they ſhould ſay, that Struenſee turned chriſtian through fear, or that he was out of his mind, or that I ſtunned him with my declamations; I muſt leave it to them to judge as they think proper.

My intention in publiſhing what Struenſee with his own hand has drawn up, is to make it appear, that he himſelf had attentively conſidered his former ſyſtem as well as chriſtianity, and that, after ſuch a mature conſideration, he was induced to quit

quit the former, and to embrace the latter.

An accuracy in ideas and expreſſions, no body will expect in the writings of a man, who ſtudied religion but a few months, who through the whole courſe of his former life thought very little of it, and who never wrote a word about it. If it ſhould be found entirely wanting in ſome places, I hope every chriſtian (and every chriſtian will judge according to charity) will not charge him with hereſy, which was (even the name of it) unknown to him. The chief point, that he died truſting in the mercy of God through Chriſt Jeſus, with ſentiments as well reformed as could be done without a miracle, I hope no body will diſpute. But I ſcarce dare to judge of the merit of this converſion, ſince it concerns me too much, and I wiſh too ardently that every one may believe it to be a ſincere one; even this ſhews me the danger I am in, of deceiving myſelf in my opinion. Therefore, having here

here faithfully given the narrative of this converſion, I leave it to ſenſible and judicious chriſtians to determine concerning the probability of it.

I do not know whether I have occaſion to declare, that by the account which I give here, my intention is neither to render the Count's memory odious, nor to apologize for him. Thoſe who on account of his crimes, have juſt reaſon to be prejudiced againſt him, will now think it their duty to forgive him, and to pity his former infatuation. Thoſe who find his behaviour in the latter part of his life decent and becoming a chriſtian, will not forget what he was before, and how inevitably he drew his melancholy fate upon himſelf.

*Copenhagen, June* the 22d, 1772.

ERRATUM.

P. 80. l. 14. for *now found*, read *formerly thought*.

THE

THE

# HISTORY

OF THE

# CONVERSION

OF

# COUNT STRUENSEE.

COUNT Struenſee had, neither before nor during the time of his greateſt proſperity, ſhewn himſelf a religious or a moral man, at leaſt no one could think him to be ſuch; his own example, ſome of his public regulations, and his aboliſhing ſuch laws as were made to reſtrain vice and immorality, ſeemed clearly to prove, that the general opinion concerning his ſentiments of religion was not altogether ill founded. Whoever had the moſt favourable opinion of him, thought him an inconſiderate man, who had given himſelf up entirely to pleaſure and ambition, and who perhaps might recover from his errors. But all ſenſible people agreed in this, that during his adminiſtration religion had every thing to fear, and that the

morals of the people, at leaſt in the metropolis, were in danger of becoming wild and ungovernable.

Theſe reflections occaſioned many honeſt and good people, who are incapable of rejoicing at the misfortunes of others, to look upon the 17th of January, the day when Struenſee fell, as one of the happieſt days in their life: they ſaw the rights of virtue and piety ſecured from that danger which ſeemed to threaten them; they wiſhed that the man, from whom no more was to be feared, and whoſe unhappy fate might eaſily be foretold, would acknowledge his errors and his crimes, and that God afterwards would grant him mercy.

When by the committee that was appointed to enquire into his affairs, ſo much was diſcovered that it was ſure his life would fall a ſacrifice to public juſtice, I received the King's orders to viſit him in his priſon, and to mind the welfare of his ſoul. I did not know the man, nor did he know me; and as to our principles and ſentiments, they were to all appearance very different. I had even to expect that my profeſſion and the intent I viſited him with would make him diſtruſt me; on the other hand, I had little reaſon to put great confidence in him. However, I entertained ſome hopes, that in his preſent ſituation he might find even a converſation

verſation with a clergyman not quite inſupportable; and the compaſſion I had for him would never permit me to prepoſſeſs him againſt me by ſevere and ill-timed expoſtulations. Beſides, I was told by ſome of his former acquaintance, that he was open, and in ſome reſpects ſincere; I thought it therefore not impoſſible to eſtabliſh a friendſhip between us that might promote my intention concerning him. With theſe hopes I began to viſit him, and I praiſe God for the bleſſing he has granted to my labours.

*The firſt Conference. March the firſt*, 1772.

I Could at preſent have no other view but only to lay ſome foundation for our mutual confidence, and to make him look upon the intention of my viſits as important, and, when an opportunity ſhould offer, to know his ſentiments about religion.

When he was told I was there, and wiſhed to ſpeak to him, he enquired whether I came by command? being anſwered in the affirmative, he complied. He received me with a ſour and gloomy countenance, in the attitude of a man who was prepared to receive many ſevere reproaches, with a ſilence that ſhewed contempt. We were alone, and I was greatly moved, beholding the miſery of a man who, but a few

weeks ago, was the firſt and the moſt powerful of all the King's ſubjects. I could neither hide my feelings, nor would I. Good Count, ſaid I, you ſee I come with a heart that is ſenſibly affected for you: I know and feel my obligations towards an unhappy man, whom God, I am ſure, never intended to be born for ſuch a misfortune. I ſincerely wiſh to make my viſits, which I am ordered to pay you, agreeable and uſeful.—Here he quitted his affected attitude, his countenance grew more ſerene, he gave me his hand, and thanked me for the ſhare I took in his fate. Our converſation, continued I, will be now and then diſagreeable both to you and me; but I profeſs moſt ſolemnly, that I ſhall tell you even theſe melancholy truths, which I have to communicate to you, without ſeverity, and even with pain to myſelf. I know I have no right to give you any unneceſſary uneaſineſs, and you may depend upon my ſincerity. Should it happen that accidentally in our converſation a word ſhould ſlip from me which perhaps may appear offenſive, I declare beforehand that it never was ſaid with ſuch a deſign, and I beg that in ſuch inſtances you will overlook my precipitation. With an air and a look that appeared to me not very favourable, he replied, "Oh! you may ſay what you pleaſe."

I ſhall

I ſhall certainly, good Count, ſay nothing but what my great deſire to contribute towards your future happineſs, as much as lies in my power, ſhall oblige me to. I wiſh to raiſe your attention to a ſerious conſideration of your moral ſtate, and how you ſtand in regard to God. You do not know how your fate in this world may be decided, and chriſtianity, which I teach and believe, makes it my duty earneſtly to wiſh for your everlaſting happineſs. Conſider my viſits and my converſation only in this view, and I hope you will not diſapprove of them. I had ſeveral reaſons to decline the King's order which brings me to you: but the hope of comforting you in your misfortunes, and of adviſing you to avoid greater ones, was too important for me. Do not charge me with views of a meaner ſort. I come not for my own ſake, but only with an intent of being uſeful to you. He then confeſſed twice that he was fully convinced, I did it for his own advantage.

If you are convinced of this, continued I with an emotion of heart, grant me then that confidence, which you cannot refuſe a man, who is anxious for your welfare. I ſhall return it with the moſt thankful friendſhip, although you in the beginning ſhould take me for a weak and prejudiced man. I ſhall not be tired in this

friendſhip, but endeavour to make it uſeful to you, ſince I am your only friend upon earth, and ſince you certainly will call upon your only friend for comfort. Here he ſtared at me, as I think, with tears in his eyes, and preſſed me by the hand.

I found him moved, and endeavoured to make uſe of this advantageous moment. If you wiſh to receive that comfort, ſaid I, which, in my opinion, I can promiſe you as the only true one, do not cheriſh that unhappy thought of dying like a philoſophical hero; for I doubt whether you will be able to keep it up to the end. I am afraid your courage will leave you at laſt, though perhaps you may force yourſelf to ſhew it outwardly. Firmneſs and tranquillity of mind, on the near approach of death, is certainly the effect only of a good conſcience. "In all my adverſities," anſwered he, "I have ſhewn firmneſs of mind, and agreeably to this character, I hope I ſhall die not like an hypocrite." Hypocriſy, ſaid I, in ſuch moments, would be ſtill worſe than an affected firmneſs, though even this would be a kind of hypocriſy. In caſe of death, do not truſt to your former reſolution, and do not compare your former adverſities, which were perhaps nothing but ſickneſs and diſtreſs, with that fate which is now

ready

ready to fall upon you. — But perhaps you entertain ſome hopes of ſaving your life? — "No!" ſaid he, "I flatter myſelf with no hopes at all."—But you do not ſee death near you, ſaid I; you do not know the time when you ſhall leave this world? Perhaps it is at ſome months diſtance. But, (here I took him by the hand) my dear Count, ſuppoſe I was ordered to tell you that you was to die to-day or to-morrow; would not your courage fail? "I do not know," ſaid he. But, continued I, if your courage ſhould leave you, and it was then too late to look out for comfort and hope, how do you think your heart would ſtand affected? He anſwered nothing. You ſee by this that the intent of our converſation is of great importance to you, and deſerves all your attention. I aim at nothing leſs, than to prepare you for eternity, that it may be a happy one. But I muſt expect that we are not both of the ſame opinion, in regard to the ſtate of man after death. Yet, though you might have perſuaded yourſelf that there is no life to come, and conſequently neither rewards nor puniſhments, I cannot help thinking that there never was a time, when you were fully convinced of it. Your inward feelings have frequently contradicted you. The thought of eternity frightened you, though unfortunately

you had art enough to ſtifle it in its birth.—However, it will be always out of your power to prove that there is no eternity.

He heard me with attention, but he would not own that he ever had any inward impreſſions of immortality, or had been afraid of it. Perhaps he might have been, but he did not recollect it. He owned the thought, that he ſhould ſoon entirely ceaſe to be, was diſagreeable to him; it frightened him, he wiſhed to live, even if it were with leſs happineſs than he now enjoyed in his priſon. But he added, he did not find the thought of total annihilation ſo terrible as he had found it was to many, who entertained the ſame ſentiments with him.

I continued, You cannot deny the poſſibility of a future life, for there is at leaſt as much probability for it as there is againſt it. I believe I could evince from mere reaſon, that eternity is highly probable, which in ſuch caſes amounts almoſt to certainty. But ſuppoſe it was only probable, which you muſt agree to, it is even then a matter of great importance to you, for you to know what may perhaps happen to you hereafter. In caſe you had to fear an unhappy life, you ſhould prepare yourſelf againſt it, or make it at leaſt tolerable.—He agreed to this, but added, "You will hardly make me believe that

that there is a future life, and though you perhaps may convince my underſtanding by reaſons which I cannot overthrow, my heart however will not yield to the conviction. My opinion, which is oppoſite to your's, is ſo ſtrongly woven into my ſentiments; I have ſo many arguments in favour of it; I have made ſo many obſervations from anatomy and phyſic, which confirm it, that I think it will be impoſſible for me to renounce my principles. This however I promiſe, that I will not wilfully oppoſe your endeavours to enlighten me, but rather wiſh, as far as it lies in my power, to concur with you. I will not diſſemble, but honeſtly tell you of what I am convinced, and of what I am not. I will deal with you openly; this is my character, and my friends can bear witneſs to it." In our enquiries, I deſired him to guard againſt his careleſs way of thinking, to which, in my opinion, he had been hitherto addicted, and which had thrown him into this depth of miſery. He anſwered:

" I do not deny my having lived inconſiderately in the world, and I feel now the conſequences of it."

I truſt in your promiſe, added I, that you will deal with me honeſtly. If you did not, you would impoſe upon me, though perhaps but for

a few

a few days. But you certainly cannot deceive the Supreme Being and your own conſcience. It would give me the higheſt pleaſure if my intentions ſhould ſucceed. But beſides the aſſiſtance of God, you muſt do all the reſt yourſelf. I can only guide you, and it is your own intereſt to mind your welfare, and you are obliged to employ all the time which is left you upon this buſineſs.

I afterwards deſired him to acquaint me with his ſyſtem of religion, that I might be able to judge, where our opinions differed. I am inclined to think you are not a chriſtian, and you may eaſily gueſs how much I wiſh you to be one. It is not my intention to force chriſtianity upon you; but I hope to repreſent it to you as ſo important and amiable, that you yourſelf will think you ſtand greatly in need of it. He anſwered:

" It was true, he was very far from being a chriſtian, though he acknowledged and adored a Supreme Being, and believed that the world and mankind had their origin from God.—He could never perſuade himſelf, that man conſiſted of two ſubſtances. He looked upon himſelf and all other men as mere machines; he had borrowed this ſyſtem, not from de la Mettrie, whoſe book he had never read, but had formed

it

it by his own meditation. It was God that firſt animated this human machine; but as ſoon as its motion ceaſed, that is, when man died, there was no more for him either to hope or to fear. He did not deny that man was endowed with ſome power of liberty, but his free actions were determined only by his ſenſations. Therefore, man's actions could be accounted moral, only as far as they related to ſociety. Every thing that man could do, was in itſelf indifferent. God did not concern himſelf about our actions, and if their conſequences were in man's own power, and he could prevent their being hurtful to ſociety, nobody had a right to reproach him about them. He added, he muſt own, that he was very ſorry for ſome of his actions, and in particular, that he had drawn others with him into misfortunes; but he feared no bad conſequences or puniſhments after this life. He could not ſee, why ſuch puniſhments were neceſſary to ſatisfy the juſtice of God, even though he allowed that God minded our actions. Man was puniſhed already enough in this world for his tranſgreſſions. He himſelf was certainly not happy during the time of his greateſt proſperity. He had, at leaſt during the laſt months of it, to ſtruggle with many diſagreeable paſſions.—One of his principal objections

jections againſt chriſtianity was, that it was not univerſal. If it were really a divine revelation, it abſolutely ſhould have been given to all mankind."

I ſaid at this time but little to anſwer all this, but recommended to him an excellent book, which, as I hoped, would contribute towards clearing up his ideas about religion. He aſked, with a kind of diffidence, "What book?" Jeruſalem's Conſiderations on the principal Truths of Religion, ſaid I; a book which you will read with pleaſure, if it even was only for the elegance of its ſtile. He deſired me to bring it to him.

I had obſerved, that he was really very uneaſy about ſome of his actions, and I thought proper to encreaſe his uneaſineſs. I ſuppoſe my readers know how much he was to be blamed for his conduct towards count Bernſtorf *. I acquainted him, therefore, upon taking my leave of him, with his death. He called out with an emotion of heart: "What, is he dead?" and ſeemed to ſhudder. Yes, ſaid I, he is. His wiſdom, religion, and piety, have preſerved him the

* Count Bernſtorf was miniſter of ſtate in Denmark ſince the year 1750. Struenſee got this great and beloved miniſter diſmiſſed, by a letter of the king's, dated September the 15th, 1770, with a penſion of 6000 crowns; he retired to Hamburgh, where he died the 18th of February, 1772.

character

character of a great man to the laſt; and it is generally believed, that the grief of his laſt years had haſtened his death. When I ſpoke this, I looked at him with an air which he ſeemed to underſtand, for he bluſhed.

## *The ſecond Conference. March the third.*

THE firſt thing I had to do now, with Count Struenſee, was to convince him of the falſity of his ſyſtem, that man was a mere machine. For hence he concluded, that there was no future life. Beſides, as he looked upon eternity as a mere fable, he could not regard religion and morality.

I reminded him of his promiſe, not to oppoſe truth wilfully, but rather to meet it half way. You think your opinion, ſaid I, of man's being a mere machine, to be true, and you conclude from thence more, than there is in reality foundation for. However, I preſume, you think this opinion of yours is no more than a philoſophical hypotheſis, and in this view let us conſider it to day. It is not very neceſſary to enter into a particular conſideration of it, for it cannot be proved from thence, that there is no futurity. However, let us conſider it, that you may not think I intend to ſurprize you.—When I had

exhauſted all my arguments and reaſonings, I found they had but little effect upon his underſtanding. At laſt he owned, that the hypotheſis, of the exiſtence of a ſoul, was better founded than his. But he ſaid, he had good reaſons to maintain his former ſentiments; for the knowledge of man, was in general very uncertain. He might, perhaps, hitherto have impoſed upon himſelf: but he was liable, as often as he adopted a new opinion, to be deceived. Beſides, his mind was, in his preſent ſituation, neither compoſed nor ſerene enough to examine his preſent principles. He ſhould have done this ſooner; it was now too late. Several things being replied, the whole concluded with a ſerious and tender exhortation, not to let the few laſt weeks of his life ſlip away uſeleſs for eternity, but to do his beſt, to enter into it with good hopes. He then looked very earneſtly at me, and caſting down his eyes, replied:

"You muſt have a great deal of goodneſs, humanity, and faithfulneſs of a miniſter, ſince you are ſo anxious about my welfare, and are not diſpleaſed at my not agreeing with you exactly in opinion."

I aſſure you, continued I, I ſhall not, until the very laſt day of your life, deſiſt from exhorting and intreating you, and I hope God will bleſs

bleſs my endeavours. But, good Count, I am afraid of your unhappy diſpoſition, which has contributed ſo much to your misfortune; your ambition, and your deſire to be always in the right, prevents your doing juſtice to truth. How is it poſſible, that you can be ſtill fond of an inclination, which has thrown you into ſuch a miſery?

" Oh! ſaid he, this inclination is gone, I am now very little in my own eyes; and how could I be ambitious in this place!" This paſſion, anſwered I, rages certainly ſtill in your ſoul. The occaſions of ſhewing itſelf as formerly are only wanting. But though it may oppoſe the truth, if you indulge it, yet take heed, leſt deſpiſed truth ſhould revenge itſelf.

Since it was now greatly my intereſt, to ſoften his heart for humane and tender feelings, for by this I hoped to make way for religion; I begged him to conſider, how infinitely he had afflicted his parents, and how much it, therefore, was his duty, to uſe all his endeavours to procure them that only comfort which was left them, not to be anxious about his future ſtate. He anſwered, " My father is an honeſt man, he acts according to his own ſentiments; but I believe he has treated me too ſeverely." You may think ſo, ſaid I, but I fancy you are miſ-

taken. Without doubt you have been extravagant from your very youth, which your honeſt father diſapproved. This you called ſeverity. "This is true, but"—But, ſaid I, you knew he was father, and you ſon. Were you ignorant that you owed obedience to your father, who was beſides an honeſt man? "I was dutiful to a certain age." But, ſaid I, were you after certain years leſs ſon, and he leſs father? Confucius, whoſe moral ſyſtem, as I remember to have heard, you prefer to that of Chriſt, might have informed you better. He replied, "You are in the right!"

I left him Jeruſalem's Meditations *, which he promiſed to read with attention, and took my leave of him, moved and in tears on account of his miſery. He deſired me to viſit him ſoon again.

## *The third Conference. March the fifth.*

WHEN I came to the Count, I addreſſed him thus,—My heart tells me that we ſhall advance to-day a ſtep forwards. I ſee you read Jeruſalem's Meditations. How far are you advanced, and how do you like the book? "I

* *Conſiderations on the principal Truths of Religion.* To his Highneſs the Hereditary Prince of Brunſwic. Vol. i. Third Edition. *Brunſwic.* 1770.

am

am come already to that meditation which concerns the morality of man. The book is excellently written, and I find nothing which contradicts my reason. I found something against my opinion of man's being a machine; but still I think sensibility proves it, and explains every thing." I answered, that the organs of our senses were no more than mirrours and spy-glasses, through which we observed the objects; that neither mirrour nor spy-glass could see any thing; but there must be a third, who observed the objects through these instruments, and this third was our soul.

He was sensible of this, but it seemed to be a hard matter for him to own he was in the wrong. Nevertheless, it was necessary he should make this confession before I could proceed any farther. I undertook therefore to prove, that the manner in which his opinion had taken its origin, and had interested his heart so much, tended neither to his credit nor to his advantage. I looked upon this as the best means to expel one shame by another.—He interrupted me very seldom during the time I was speaking, but heard with much attention, and owned that I had exactly pointed out the way which had led him to his opinion. After a short pause on both sides, during which he seemed to be in a deep meditation, he called

out: "Oh! I hope now, and wiſh for immortality." I gueſſed directly that the reading of Jeruſalem had brought him ſo far, and he ſoon afterwards ſaid himſelf; "It is impoſſible not to be brought over by that book."

As he now hoped and wiſhed for immortality, I thought it needleſs to enter into more ample diſquiſitions about the exiſtence, nature and immortality of the ſoul. Beſides, I was afraid that theſe ſpeculative truths might detain us too long, and miſlead us to various reſearches which are but little adapted to make the heart better. It was enough for me that he now was ſenſible of the exiſtence of eternity: however, we talked to-day about the arguments for the exiſtence of a ſoul.

The falſe eaſe, which hitherto had rendered the Count inſenſible, and which was ſupported by his perſuaſion of there being no future life, was now interrupted. I thought it neceſſary to remove it entirely before I could procure him true eaſe of mind. I muſt convince him therefore, that in that future life, which he hoped and wiſhed for, he could not promiſe himſelf an agreeable fate; and for this purpoſe his notions of the morality of actions were to be rectified firſt. My readers will recollect that he believed

human

human actions only ſo far good or bad as they were attended with good or bad conſequences to ſociety. Before I could attack this propoſition, I thought proper to ſhew how little, even according to this principle, he ſhould be able to account for his actions before God. I might at preſent, ſaid I, leave your rule by which you judge of the morality of actions unmoleſted. Your actions even then would not bear ſcrutiny. I was ſurprized when he anſwered:

"I find now, that it is by far better and ſurer to derive the motives of our actions from God, and to conſider him as obſerving them."

Saying this, he pointed at Jeruſalem's book, and I thanked in my heart this excellent man that he had promoted my endeavours ſo far.

In the mean time, I begged of the Count to reflect how immoral his actions had been, even according to his former principle of morality. I had now diſcovered that ſide where the wounds of his conſcience ſmarted moſt. He was not by far ſo much grieved at thinking that he had offended God, and made himſelf miſerable, as that he had ruined his friends with him. This ſenſation of his I laid hold on, and endeavoured to ſupport and to increaſe it. I hoped his pain

might by degrees become more univerſal, and extend itſelf over his other crimes.

I had ſcarcely began to touch him on this ſide, when he burſt into tears, and owned, that he found himſelf in this reſpect very culpable, and was abſolutely at a loſs to ſay any thing in his defence.

Suppoſe then, continued I, you had to reproach yourſelf only with being the cauſe of all the misfortunes your friends now labour under, it muſt even then be very difficult or rather impoſſible to account for it before God.

" I acknowledge this," ſaid he, " and therefore ſhall ſay nothing to excuſe myſelf before God, and I hope he will not demand this of me. I truſt in my repentance and his mercy. Do not you think God will forgive me on account of this philoſophical repentance?"

According to my notions of repentance, I can give you no hopes. I know but one way to receive God's pardon, and this is not a philoſophical but a Chriſtian repentance. I cannot yet produce the reaſons why I am obliged to think ſo; but if you only reflect on God's mercy, in which you truſt, you will find that it is this very mercy which makes it neceſſary for him to be juſt, and to ſhew his averſion to moral evil.

evil. Such mercy as that of God, which cannot degenerate into weakneſs, muſt no doubt be very terrible to him who has offended againſt it. I entreat you not to put a blind and ill-founded confidence in it.—Perhaps I pronounced this with a viſible emotion of heart, for he interrupted me, ſaying, " Your humanity muſt be very great, ſince your patience is not tired."

It certainly ſhall not be tired, but I am uneaſy and in pain about you.

" You muſt not be ſo much concerned for me. —What would you do if I was ſo unhappy as to remain unconvinced?"

It would grieve me unſpeakably. I ſhould wiſh to conceive good hopes of you, but I fear without reaſon. Pray do what lies in your power, God will bleſs your endeavours. I hope you will even yet, upon good grounds, think yourſelf pardoned by God, and be able to die with comfort and a fair proſpect into eternity. Here he called out, with a deep-fetched ſigh: " May God grant it!"

He added, " You wiſh, and I believe from good reaſons, that I might become a Chriſtian."

To be ſure, (replied I) I wiſh it very much; but you know favours are not forced upon any body; and it is natural for you to look out for the

greateſt that can be beſtowed upon you. Learn firſt to feel how dangerous your condition is, and your own wants and miſery will then compel you to ſearch for God's mercy, where it is only to be found.

" But pray," ſaid he, " how can chriſtianity be the only way that is revealed by God for our everlaſting happineſs, ſince it is ſo little known among mankind, and ſince there are, even among chriſtians themſelves, ſo few that keep its precepts ?"

From your firſt doubts, ſaid I, you mean to draw the inference, that it was againſt the goodneſs and juſtice of God not to reveal to all men a doctrine which is the only one that can render man perfectly happy. But do you know whether God will not ſave thoſe who are ignorant of chriſtianity by its diſpenſations, if they behave as well as lies in their power ? And can a man, whom God has preſented with a bleſſing, which he denied to others, think himſelf for this reaſon intitled not to mind this bleſſing or not to value it, becauſe God has not given it to all men ? Has he not diſtributed all the bleſſings of his mercy unequally among men ; for inſtance, honour, riches, health, talents, and even the knowledge of natural religion ? You ſee by this

this that your objection proves more than you intended.

From your second doubt you will conclude, that, because christianity is observed by so very few, therefore it cannot be a sufficient means to answer the purpose, it is said, God intended it for, and consequently its origin cannot be a divine one. But I would wish you to observe, that it is a religion of free beings, and that they are under no controul in a matter which concerns their happiness. Besides, prejudices, errors and passions can render the strongest moral arguments ineffectual. However, it cannot be denied that mankind, upon the whole, since the establishment of the christian religion, has been greatly reformed, and that its power over the human mind is stronger than you seem to credit.

" But even good christians," added he, " often commit sins! Shall, or can a man in this world be perfect? and is the intention of christianity to produce effects, which, as to our present condition, are quite impossible?"

There is a great difference between the sin of a true christian, of whom we speak only, and between the crimes of a wicked man. The former falls but he rises again; the latter continues in his transgressions and repeats them.

And if there was but one chriſtian only upon the whole earth, whoſe life did honour to his profeſſion, it would be a ſufficient reaſon for every one that knew him, to examine the religion of this only chriſtian, and to adopt it when he found it was well-grounded. He ſaid: "Oh! I have ſo many of theſe doubts, that it will be the moſt difficult thing to ſatisfy them all."

He uttered this with a mien that expreſſed great concern, and I thought proper to comfort him by ſaying, that his doubts would leſſen according as he got more acquainted with chriſtianity. And if there ſhould be left an uncertainty about ſome point or other, he might reſt ſatisfied with thinking that God would judge him, according to the time he had had, the condition he was in, and the ſincerity he ſhewed in his ſearching after truth; chriſtianity concerned more the heart than the underſtanding.—I diſcovered a hope that he ſoon would become a chriſtian, which he ſeemed to be pleaſed with, and when I exhorted him to pray to God to enlighten his mind, he aſked:

"Whether a hearty wiſh, addreſſed to God, was not already prayer or adoration?"

I anſwered in the affirmative; and after ſome exhortations took my leave, and gave him the book

of

of Reimarus *on the principal doctrines of natural religion.*

## *The fourth Conference. March the eighth.*

I HAD now already great advantages in my hands. The Count was ſenſible of an approaching eternity, and could not, nor would he any more oppoſe the impreſſions which the proſpect of it made upon him. He was concerned about his moral condition, but not enough yet; at leaſt, not on account of the diſpleaſure of God, which he was labouring under. He wiſhed chriſtianity might comfort him, but he thought it ſtill an impoſſibility to be fully convinced of its truth. I now endeavoured to make chriſtianity neceſſary to him, for reaſons which were derived from the miſery and danger he was in. I intended to give him opportunity from time to time, to get acquainted with the arguments of the chriſtian religion; that in the ſame meaſure, as his deſire increaſed after its comforts, the difficulties which he expected to meet with, might decreaſe. But, before I could make him truly ſenſible of the danger which his immoral life had thrown him into, we had firſt to agree about the reaſons, which the morality of human actions is grounded upon.

Since the Count now believed immortality, and in ſome reſpect, the morality of actions likewiſe, I undertook to convince him that human actions are not good or bad, merely on account of their conſequences in ſociety, which hitherto had been his opinion.

The reading of the ſeventh of Jeruſalem's Meditations, which treats on the morality of human actions, had, as the Count himſelf owned, already removed many of his doubts, and taught him that true moral liberty did not conſiſt in determining oneſelf according to the firſt impreſſion a thing had made upon us, but that it is required to conſider a matter properly, and not to chuſe a thing before we are ſufficiently acquainted with it. I ſhewed him, how impoſſible it was for man always to foreſee and to regulate the conſequences of his actions, on account of the infirmity and narrow bounds of our underſtanding, and becauſe we are ſo eaſily blinded by our paſſions.

As to this laſt reaſon, the Count himſelf ſaid, " That paſſions would overpower us, even then, when we ſee that the actions to which they excite us can be detrimental to ſociety. They would perſuade us, that the conſequences they might be attended with are in our power; that by precaution and acting ſecretly, we might avoid them.

them. They would ſupply us with various excuſes, and incline us to think them to be true." He did not take it amiſs, when I applied this to his own life.

I afterwards proved, that the will of God is the only rule by which the morality of actions is to be determined; not becauſe God had ordered that this action or another ſhould be abſolutely good or bad, but becauſe his infinite underſtanding found them really ſo from all eternity, even without regard to men, created with liberty to treſpaſs againſt his moral laws.

The next point I thought neceſſary to be proved was, that God had really revealed his will about the morality of actions. I would not draw my arguments from the Bible, ſince I had not yet proved it to be a divine revelation, but rather from the dictates of conſcience.

This being done, as well as the nature of the propoſition would admit of, I anſwered the objections which the Count made. The firſt was, "That though he had no inclination for raiſing any doubts, but ſhould rather endeavour to avoid them; yet the ſincerity wherewith our conferences were to be carried on, required him to tell plainly, what he was not convinced of. Therefore, he owned, that notwithſtanding there

was

was ſuch moral ſenſation in man, he nevertheleſs was uncertain, whether it was born with him. Perhaps it might be a certain prejudice ?"

If this was ſo, replied I, how could it happen that this prejudice was an univerſal one, common both to the virtuous and the wicked ?

" Perhaps then," ſaid he, " it is the effect of experience or cuſtom, that we are uſed to conſider the actions of others, as relating to ourſelves." My anſwer was, that this moral ſenſation is found in man, before he is taught it by experience and cuſtom.

" And ſuppoſe," ſaid the Count, " we ſhould find it a conſequence of education ?"

Neither can this be, replied I, for it is in a child prior to education. It is to be met with in a ſavage Greenlander and a Hottentot, who reaſons on ſome actions more ſoundly than nations, whoſe moral ſenſations are tainted by education, and by their way of living.

" He now owned, that the notion of morality was born with us, and that it laid deep in our nature. That it took its origin from our Creator, and that we, by the dictates of this inward feeling, were informed of the will of God in regard to good or bad actions."

From

From what he had ſaid, I now drew ſome inferences, and told him, that in order to qualify himſelf for God's mercy, it was neceſſary to ſearch his former life, and to acknowledge his faults and crimes. I was afraid to leave this ſelf-examination entirely to himſelf; and therefore told him, that I ſhould review with him his life, tho' it was a diſagreeable taſk for both; hoping he would aſſiſt me therein with all ſincerity. He promiſed to confeſs every thing, and giving me his hand, he ſaid, he would take me entirely for his guide.

After ſome ſilence on both ſides, and amidſt his tears, he looked at me with an air that betrayed both anxiety and confidence, and ſaid, "If my tears come only out of the right ſource!"

Good Count, ſaid I, I ſuſpect the reaſon why you cry. It is certainly the misfortune which you have thrown your friends into. This is your tender ſide, which pains, even when it is but ſlightly touched. Examine yourſelf, whether it is but perſonal friendſhip, or the remembrance of mutual enjoyed pleaſures, or the ſorrow of having loſt the hope of their continuation? or, whether it is the conſciouſneſs that you have offended God, religion and virtue, in the perſons of your unfortunate friends.

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He conſidered a while, and at laſt called out: "Oh! it is extremely difficult, to come to any certainty in this point!"

Not long after, he added: "I fear it is now too late to beg for God's mercy! and perhaps I do it in my preſent ſituation out of neceſſity!"

I told him upon this, that though he had reaſon to reproach himſelf very much, that he had ſpent his whole life without thinking of God, or endeavouring to make him his friend; yet there was no diſtinction betwixt thoſe that came early and thoſe that came late. It was only the ſincerity with which we ſeek for God's mercy.

He added, "Perhaps I do it out of complaiſance to you." To which I replied, that I could ſcarce believe this, becauſe he ſhed ſo many tears, and was ſo ſorry and ſo much concerned.

After ſome conſideration, he ſaid: "Of what uſe would it be to me? No, (here he took me by the hand,) it is not out of complaiſance to you." He then ſaid: "I remember that in the inſtruction of chriſtianity, which I received in my younger days, I was told, a chriſtian ought to die with the utmoſt chearfulneſs and confidence. But I am ſo anxious about doubts. They return al-

ways again, notwithſtanding I endeavour to remove them, and will not let them gain ground."

I ſuſpected, and found afterwards but too juſtly, that he was throwing out a hint about ſome ſtrange inward feelings, which ſome chriſtians pretend to have, as indiſputable ſigns and conſequences of their being pardoned before God. I therefore told him, that ſuch inward feelings, if there ever were things of that kind, could not be looked upon as abſolutely neceſſary, and as things which muſt inevitably follow. I knew many ſincere chriſtians that were without them; and I myſelf, though conſcious of being a chriſtian, had never perceived them.

He interrupted me, by ſaying: "I myſelf ſaw a pious man dying, who left this world in great anxiety."

I continued, Good Count, that eaſe of mind which I wiſh you, when you are dying, and which it is poſſible you may attain, does not conſiſt in a viſible joy; it is rather a certain tranquillity of the ſoul, which ariſes from a conviction, that we have fulfilled all thoſe conditions which God has laid down as the only ones for our receiving his pardon.

"How tottering," ſaid he, "has been my former ſyſtem, and how ſure was I, nevertheleſs, of

of its truth! I was reſolved, that if I ſhould die, I would adhere to my principles; I would ſuppoſe them to be indiſputable, and would let death approach without any further ſcrutiny. And for this very reaſon, I had begged to be excuſed from ſeeing any clergyman."

You ſee from this, good Count, replied I, what a difference there is between truth and error. What you mentioned, were your ſentiments about eight days ago. And now you read Jeruſalem's work with the greateſt aſſiduity, though he contradicts your principles every where.

"Oh!" ſaid he, "it is an incomparable book; pray bring me the other volumes." How ſorry was I, that then only one volume was publiſhed. "Could you not," continued he, "give this book to be read by ſome of my friends, who think of religion as I did, and were perhaps induced to it by my example and converſation?" I promiſed I would look out for ſuch opportunities.

I now wanted to conduct him further into chriſtianity, with whoſe moral ſide he was to be firſt made acquainted; for, as to the dogmatical part he knew already more of it, though he thought it impoſſible to believe its myſteries. However, I was ſure, that even here, he would become,

become a believer, if he was firſt convinced of the excellency of the morals Chriſt has preached, and if the myſteries of chriſtianity were laid before him, as Scripture propoſes them, ſeparated from human explications. To make him converſant with the precepts of the Goſpel, I thought it beſt to let him read the hiſtory of Chriſt. I told him, I wiſhed that he might learn from the moral character of Chriſt, that he was a good and divine man, and one that deſerves great credit. Perhaps it may prepoſſeſs you in his favour, when I tell you, that even Voltaire, inclined as he is to calumniate Chriſt, does juſtice to his moral character. "Does he?" replied the Count. I will read to you, continued I, ſome paſſages from the *Evangile du jour*, which no doubt is a work of Voltaire. I added, that Rouſſeau was quite charmed with Chriſt's morals, and his death. He remembered to have found ſomething of this kind in his *Emile*. I might recommend to you, continued I, the New Teſtament, to read the hiſtory of Chriſt; but I chuſe to decline this at preſent, ſince it is diſperſed through all the four Evangeliſts, and ſince many places are wrongly tranſlated, and many more, on account of their reference to the manners of the times and people, and the ſituation of places, might be obſcure to you; and ſince you yourſelf, probably, have

abuſed ſome Scripture expreſſions, to ridicule and to make a jeſt of them. "Yes," ſaid he, "you are in the right." I promiſed therefore, to bring to him the hiſtory of the three latter years of the life of Chriſt, as it is properly compiled, regulated, explained, and told in a modern ſtile.

Cramer * had deſired me to give his compliments to the Count, and to tell him, that Count Bernſtorf had forgiven him, and that he, in the latter days of his life, was very much concerned about the ſalvation of *his* ſoul. He aſked: "Has Bernſtorf lived to hear of my being arreſted?" Yes, ſaid I, he died about a fortnight ago. He burſt out into tears again, and deſired me to tell Cramer, that he wiſhed to be worthy of his memory, and that he was obliged to him for his intelligence.

I left him to-day Gellert's Lectures on Morality †. He had almoſt finiſhed Reimarus's book. During my abſence, he always employed the greateſt part of his time in reading thoſe books which I had brought him.

* This eminent divine is now living at Lubeck. He was formerly chaplain at the court of Copenhagen.

† Theſe *Lectures on Morality*, read in the univerſity of Leipſic, *by the late Mr. Gellert*, were tranſlated laſt year into French. See the Appendix to the 47th volume of the Monthly Review, page 508.

*The fifth Conference. March the tenth.*

I FOUND the Count reading Gellert's Lectures on Morality, about whoſe excellency he did not know how to expreſs himſelf properly. He ſaid:

"Had I but a year ago read ſuch books in retirement from diſſipation, I ſhould have been quite another man. But I lived as in a dream. However, where are ſuch chriſtians as are here deſcribed?"

I told him that I believed Gellert himſelf to have been ſuch a chriſtian as is deſcribed in the book, which was chiefly written, to ſhew that perfection a chriſtian was to ſtrive for. I reminded him of our agreement, to examine more minutely his moral conduct, in order to convince him more of the greatneſs of his ſins, and the neceſſity of his repentance.

In a ſerious exhortation, I begged of him to act now with all ſincerity; and the Count then began:

"I know very well that I cannot apologize for my actions. But for this very reaſon I wiſh the exiſtence of eternity, becauſe God, who knows exactly the complication of circumſtances and the ſituation I have been in, will determine more

truly and juſtly the morality or immorality of my actions, than men ever can do."

I now delineated the outlines of his character as I had reaſon to think it to be. God, ſaid I, has given you not a common underſtanding, and, as I believe, a good natural diſpoſition of heart; but through voluptuouſneſs, ambition and inconſiderateneſs, you have corrupted yourſelf. He confirmed my conjectures, and added:

"That voluptuouſneſs had been his chief paſſion, which had contributed moſt to his moral depravity."

We will begin, ſaid I, with this paſſion, and ſee to what ſins it has led you. After deſcribing how far it was extravagant, the Count owned with great emotion of heart,

"His opinion had always been, that he lived for no other purpoſe but to procure himſelf agreeable ſenſations. He had reduced every thing to this point, and if now and then he had done ſomething good, he had never conſidered it as an obligation of charity or of obedience towards God, but as a mere means to promote his own pleaſure. In his very youth, he blindly had abandoned himſelf to all ſorts of extravagancies. When he found the conſequences of his irregular life, he endeavoured

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to reſtore his health again by regularity and continence, in order to enjoy pleaſure the longer. Having recovered health again, he indulged himſelf in irregularities of voluptuouſneſs under a mild government of reaſon, and refrained himſelf from abandoned extravagancies. What humiliated him moſt, was, that he could not accuſe any body that had ſeduced him, but that he muſt confeſs to have been his own ſeducer, by reading certain books, which he mentioned."

The more minute examination of his life in regard to this chief paſſion of his, I regulated according to certain queſtions. During the whole enquiry, he did not leave off crying. It ſeemed as if he felt a kind of eaſe, by intruſting me with the anxiety of his heart which he felt on account of this ſpecies of tranſgreſſion. I will write the queſtions down in the manner I propoſed them to him, and add thoſe of his anſwers, which are more than a ſimple confeſſion, and can contribute to clear up his former way of thinking, and ſerve to increaſe the abhorrence of the vice of lewdneſs.

How much time has by your eager purſuit of pleaſures been ſquandered away, that might and ſhould have been employed better?—He gave for anſwer,

" I always impoſed upon myſelf by thinking, becauſe I could work very quick, and could diſpatch the buſineſs of my different ſtations in life in leſs time than many others, that therefore the reſt of my time ought to be dedicated to my pleaſures, and was in a manner gained. But I ſee now too late, how much it was my duty to be officious in promoting good, according to that meaſure of talents God has truſted me with."

How many good actions are left undone? and how inſatiable have you been in your luſt? How much have you meditated to procure yourſelf new ſenſual enjoyments?

" To be overloaded with pleaſures, is attended with an inevitable emptineſs, and to fill up the vacancies makes us ſtudy variety of pleaſures."

How much did you neglect by this the improving and forming of your ſoul and heart? Remember the years you have ſpent at ſchool and the univerſity!

" It kept me very backward, and not till late years did I begin to make myſelf acquainted with thoſe things which I ſhould have learnt at ſchool. Being at the univerſity, I lived now and then for whole months together in diſſipation and extravagancies, but then I kept to my ſtudies for a time again. Improving and forming my heart,

I never

I never thought of before I was two or three and twenty years of age. Since that time I collected by degrees thoſe principles of morality I informed you of."

How neglectful has your luſt made you towards God, yourſelf, and other men, even in thoſe duties which your particular ſtation in life required of you?

" I turned my thoughts very little towards God, and did not believe that I owed him any thing more, than a general gratitude for my exiſtence. I might perhaps have often neglected the particular duties of my reſpective ſtations in life, for the ſake of enjoying pleaſures, but at other times I have as phyſician taken great pains about my patients."

Very likely you have, by the perpetual enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures, heated your fancy, and filled it with foul images, which perhaps diſturb you ſtill, and hinder your ſerious reflexions. In what a giddineſs of luſt have you lived, or rather not lived, but only dreamt?

" When I now recollect, I find that my life has been but a dream. I remember to have done but little good, by which I might know that I really have lived."

How much has your luſt degraded your dignity as a man, and ranked you among irrational creatures, whoſe pleaſures conſiſt only in that which is ſenſual?

" I thought myſelf no more than an animal, and believed there was no difference of ſpecies, but only of ſome degree of perfection between man and beaſt."

Has not your character ſuffered very much by this?

" I always thought I need not to care what the world ſaid. I therefore endeavoured to pleaſe but a few. But now I find how valuable a name is which is obtained by virtue."

How indifferent has this made you towards moral pleaſures, which are the moſt effectual ſprings to promote virtue, and are an eſſential part of real happineſs?

" In my younger years I was quite indifferent towards good ſentiments and actions. Afterwards, though I was perhaps pleaſed when I had done ſomething which I thought to be good, yet I never made any diſtinction between this nobler joy, and the gratification of my luſtful deſires."

How many has your voluptuouſneſs ruined!— Your example, and the propagating of your prin-

principles, has ſeduced young men to profligacy. Many of them have loſt their characters, ruined their conſtitution, and even met death in their purſuit of luſtful pleaſures. Perhaps deſtitute widows and orphan children, whoſe huſbands and fathers were killed by profligacy which you taught them, are now crying to the all-knowing God againſt the author of their misfortunes!

He acknowledged, in a very repenting manner, he might be guilty of all theſe crimes. His expreſſions, his countenance, and his whole attitude ſeemed to beg of me not to go on any further. I continued:

Might you not have been the ſeducer of innocent young women, and might you not, on ſuch occaſions, have wilfully ſacrificed to your voluptuouſneſs, religion, honour, and virtue? Might you not have ruined them in this world, by hindering their being married, and throwing them into contempt and poverty?

" I cannot deny that I have been a dangerous ſeducer. I often have deceived innocence by my principles. Even women of good ſenſe I have conquered; and more than this, I have made them afterwards eaſy again about their tranſgreſſions. None among thoſe that I attacked was at laſt able to reſiſt me, if ſhe did not avoid

me

me preſently. I was never at a loſs how to conquer; though I muſt ſay, I never promiſed any thing which I did not intend to perform. Notwithſtanding I did all that laid in my power to keep thoſe, who through my fault had been temporally ruined, from miſery and poverty, I am, nevertheleſs, now convinced that this by no means can excuſe me."

Perhaps there are children that do not know you to be their father, who for want of education will become a burden to ſociety, and are in danger of being ruined in this and the future world.

Here he deſired me to take upon me the care and education of a child, two years old, becauſe it was his.

I ſcarcely had made enquiry, when I heard it was dead. I mention this as a proof of his ſincerity. I continued:

And matrimonial ties, which according to the unanimous opinion of all nations ſhould be ſacred, I ſuppoſe you have broken. What an irreparable injury is hereby done to both parties! —and how much muſt this injuſtice have afflicted the injured party? Remorſe of conſcience on the ſide of the ſeduced perſons was or will be the conſequence thereof. Wherewith will you excuſe yourſelf, if grief or deſpondency ſhould be hurtful

ful to the health or the life of the injured? Is not matrimonial happineſs and domeſtic peace frequently diſturbed by theſe your tranſgreſſions?

" The injured party, ſaid he, had often never known of it, and in ſome inſtances he had rather promoted domeſtic peace by good advice, which he had given to the female criminal. He owned that he thought theſe excuſes formerly ſufficient, but he did not mention them now with the ſame intent."

Perhaps, ſaid I, honeſt fathers are obliged to maintain children, which they are convinced are not their own. Of what confuſions, enmities, and law-ſuits may this be productive, even after your death, in families that might have remained happy, if you had left them undiſturbed? Have you never uſed unnatural means to ſatisfy your voluptuous paſſions, or to prevent their diſagreeable and unexpected conſequences? He ſaid:

" In his younger years he had indulged himſelf in every thing his paſſion had driven him to, but as to the latter part of the queſtion, he knew himſelf to be innocent."—And this was the only accuſation of our to-day's ſcrutiny, to which he pleaded not guilty.

Now, continued I, what miſery have all theſe extravagancies thrown you into? Forget for a little

little while that you have offended God extremely, by creating ſo much miſchief in the world. Reflect rather on this queſtion only, How has my luſtful paſſion rewarded me, after having ſerved it ſo faithfully? You are rewarded with tranſitory, diſguſtful joys, which never have ſatisfied your deſires; with diſdain, contempt, and reproaches of all ſober people that knew of your wicked life; with impriſonment and fetters, with a premature and ignominious death.——Pray now, conſider ſeriouſly, ſuppoſe I and every body were to live in this manner, what would become of human ſociety?—He anſwered,

" I fooliſhly perſuaded myſelf, that it was conſiſtent with ſociety. The great ones in England and France, ſaid I to myſelf, lead ſuch unreſtrained life."

But, ſaid I, does this unreſtrained way of life of the great in England and France contribute towards the happineſs of either nation? And can it be believed that they, in doing ſo, are more happy than people of the middle ſort, that lead a life which is more ſtrict and more ſolid? And laſtly, are theſe great ones the whole ſociety, or are they not the ſmalleſt part of it, and if numbers are to be conſidered, the moſt inconſiderable part?

During

During the whole time of this converſation, the Count was very much moved, and ready to cry. I ſaw how affecting and humiliating the ſcene of his paſt life was to him.

" How is it poſſible, ſaid he, that I could ever be ſo convinced of my former principles, and could ever forget myſelf ſo far !"

I recommended to him to ſearch the whole courſe of his former life more minutely, and left him for this purpoſe further written inſtructions. I gave him likewiſe the two firſt parts of the three laſt years of the life of Chriſt. The Count then ſaid :

" That he valued the morals of chriſtianity very much, and thought them truly divine ; but he was afraid the myſteries of religion might prevent his being fully perſuaded of its truth, though he promiſed to ſpare no pains to get convinced."

Upon this I told him, that the grace of God would aſſiſt his endeavours, and that his doubts would ceaſe in time. He then ſtarted three objections : the firſt, why the immortality of the ſoul was not taught in the writings of Moſes ? the ſecond, how Chriſt could be the Son of God ? and thirdly, how three perſons could be in one Deity ? To the firſt I replied, that if it was agreed

that

that in the writings of Moſes no mention was made of the immortality of the ſoul, it did nevertheleſs by no means follow, that this doctrine was unknown to the Jews, or that the truth of it was leſs certain. And as for his ſecond and third objections, I told him, that ſince their refutation is grounded upon right explanations of ſcripture paſſages, for which he was not yet prepared, I could only tell him this beforehand, that the words wherein theſe myſteries are revealed, muſt be cautiouſly explained, ſince they were more adapted to inform men of the exiſtence of what is above their conception, than to expreſs fully the nature of the myſtery.

## *The ſixth Conference. March the twelfth.*

I Now conducted the Count to the ſecond great ſource of his tranſgreſſion, which, I thought, was his ambition. You had, ſaid I, too great an opinion of your underſtanding, and of the goodneſs of your intentions, which at the bottom were but means to ſatisfy your chief paſſion. He replied:

" He had been ſo weak, as to let himſelf be perſuaded by a perſon that made too much of him, that his underſtanding was ſo great, that he could

could do every thing which was in the power of man. Helvetius, whom he had read much, had likewiſe induced him to believe this. For he ſays, that ſince the organiſation of every man was the ſame, conſequently every one was capable of doing the ſame thing another man could do. He had thought himſelf convinced of the goodneſs of his intentions, though he muſt own he had purſued principles which ought to be rejected, and that always the chief end he had in view was his pleaſure."

I then put him in mind how many people he had made unhappy through his ambition; how unjuſt and hard he had been to ſatisfy this paſſion; how obſtinately he oppoſed thoſe that underſtood the affairs of ſtate better than himſelf, even then when he knew he was in the wrong. What dangerous and violent means he had uſed to keep himſelf in his dignity, and to what danger he had expoſed the ſubjects of the King, particularly the inhabitants of the metropolis. To this he replied,

" It was true, that he for his own ſafety had made regulations which he had not thought to be dangerous, ſince he knew inſtances wherein even the ſight only of ſuch preparations had prevented and quelled diſturbances. But now, when he conſi-

conſidered matters more coolly, he ſaw very well that he might have been the author of great miſchief."

I deſired him to conſider, whether he had not made too free with the revenues of the ſtate?—At how great an expence he had lived at laſt?—What an unconſtitutional power he had arrogated to himſelf? &c.

The two chief paſſions of the Count, voluptuouſneſs and ambition, being accompanied with great inconſiderateneſs, I reminded him of his inconſiderate treatment of religion, and how he had made a jeſt of the moſt ſerious things in the world, and ſtudied perhaps to communicate his opinions to others. To which he gave for anſwer:

"He could not deny that religion had frequently been with him a ſubject of ridicule. But he had been guilty of this kind of inconſiderateneſs, moſtly in the company of ſuch perſons as were already prejudiced againſt religion. He never had made it his buſineſs to make proſelytes, though he had made no ſecret of his irreligion. He acknowledged himſelf in all this culpable before God and his conſcience."

After ſeveral other queſtions, I aſked the Count how he could preſume to ſit at the helm of

government, when he knew himſelf by no means qualified for it, being without knowledge of the laws, and the language of the country, and never giving himſelf the trouble to learn either. I charged him with having given new laws inconſiderately, aboliſhing old ones without reaſon. I blamed him for having diſcharged old and approved of miniſters of ſtate, and chuſing new ones, without knowing them, and truſting in them without being ſure of their being honeſt men; only becauſe he thought they would prove themſelves to be his friends.

When I told him, that he never had cared for the morals of the nation, but rather promoted immorality by bad examples, by giving opportunities to do evil, and even by making laws tending to promote it, he ſaid:

"He always believed, that it belonged only to the clergy to mind the morals of the people. He judged of the ſentiments of the nation by his own, and imagined that every one, like himſelf, looked upon pleaſure and an unreſtrained life as the only happineſs."

When I repreſented to him, that during his adminiſtration there was, eſpecially in the metropolis, an entire ſtop to trade, he replied:

" He had been ſenſible of that, and it was no matter of indifference to him, for he had been thinking how to open new ways to promote trade."

When I aſked him how it was poſſible for him to ſee the univerſal diſcontent, and to be ſenſible of it, to be cautioned by friends and foes, and nevertheleſs to neglect all this, he anſwered:

" He had always made himſelf eaſy, by the hopes that this diſcontent would ceaſe at laſt, and that the meaſures he had taken would keep him ſafe."

Though all theſe reproaches were ſevere and very humiliating, the Count ſeemed, nevertheleſs, not to be offended by them. Now and then he would ſay ſome things in his excuſe, which were nothing to me, becauſe they did not relate to what I had in view, and which I was not a judge of. However, he was upon the whole full of repentance, though he thought he could apologize for ſome particular parts of his political conduct.

" He expreſſed his anxiety, that he thought his repentance was not ſerious enough, or at leaſt that he was more ſorry on account of ſome tranſgreſſions than others."

I anſwered,

I anſwered, this fear of his was a good ſign, and a proof of the ſincerity of his repentance. I reminded him of God's mercy towards him, ſince in his priſon he had time and opportunity to conſider his former actions, and to repent of his crimes. I aſked what might have become of him, if an aſſaſſination had taken place, which he was ſo often threatened with, and which ſo eaſily could have been put into execution?

Since the laſt conference, the Count had read the two firſt parts of the hiſtory of Chriſt, and I enquiring how he liked *the man?* he ſaid:

"His morals and his perſonal conduct are excellent. The firſt are undoubtedly the beſt advice for men to make themſelves happy in all ſituations of life. Here and there I found ſomething which I did not underſtand, and which perhaps is to be explained from the manners and condition of thoſe times. But I have met with many things that have affected me much. It has humiliated me to find here many good things, which I had learned in my youth from Scripture, and which I afterwards believed I owed to the reading of other books."

When I enquired of him, if it was likely that a man whoſe life and morals were ſo excellent, and who acted ſo diſintereſtedly ("and, as he

added himſelf, who ſacrificed his life to confirm the truth of what he preached") was capable of impoſing upon the world by falſe miracles, he anſwered :

" No ! it is quite improbable."

I then told him that there are two ways to get convinced of the truth of the chriſtian religion. The firſt and the more ſure one, was a conſtant practice of Chriſt's precepts. By this a man may be convinced by his own experience of the excellency of his religion. The other was, a candid examination whether Chriſt had proved himſelf to be a true meſſenger of God, by delivering a doctrine which was worthy of God, and by performing undoubted miracles. As to the doctrine, he had owned already that it was really divine; and if the greateſt of his miracles, his reſurrection, could be proved, it followed in courſe, that the reſt of his miracles were true, or at leaſt could be ſo. I told him it was neceſſary for him to examine the evidences in behalf of this miracle himſelf; and for this purpoſe I ſhould give him a book which was written by a deiſt, who was induced to turn chriſtian after examining the reſurrection of Chriſt.

The Count ſeemed to be greatly pleaſed by this; and I left him with ſanguine hopes, after I had

I had given him the third and fourth parts of the Life of Chriſt.

*The ſeventh Conference. March the fourteenth.*

GEneral Lieutenant Holben, the commander of the caſtle where the Count was priſoner, told me, that ſince my laſt viſit he had been very uneaſy: That he frequently on a ſudden ſtarted from the couch upon which he uſed to lie during the whole time of his impriſonment: That he had been ſitting for half an hour together, hanging down his head, buried in deep thoughts, and ſobbing had ſhed a great many tears. When I entered the priſon, I found him reading Gellert, and reading indeed I always found him whenever I came.

" I muſt be quite deprived of all my reaſon, ſaid he, if I did not own, that I ſhould have lived as this book teaches me. Oh! had I but read ſuch books in the days of my proſperity, I am ſure they would have convinced and reformed me."

His countenance expreſſed great concern, ſhame and uneaſineſs. And when I aſked him how he did, he replied:

" I am very uneaſy ſince yeſterday. I cannot ſeriouſly enough repent of having led ſo bad a life,

and having acted upon such wicked principles, and used means so detrimental. My present condition, and even my death do not concern me so much as my base actions! And it is quite impossible to make any reparation for what I have done to the world.—Pray, my dear friend, do not be tired, and do not leave me."

Though I had the greatest compassion towards him, yet I thought I had not reason enough at present to make him quite composed. But when he seemed to be afraid his repentance might be too late, I comforted him in this respect, and promised to shew myself his friend to the very last. My intention by this visit was to give him opportunities to recollect his former life, and to point out to him the way for a serious repentance; but the uneasiness I found him in, would not allow me to act so seriously as I intended. Among other subjects which we were talking upon, was the pain and grief which he had caused to his honest parents from his earlier days, and now in particular towards the latter end of his life. I entreated him to consider how often he had offended them by his disobedience and obstinacy, and made them grieve about his open contempt of all religion.—What anxiety, continued I, must you have caused to these venerable persons, by those inconsiderate steps you have taken during

your reſidence in this metropolis!—Every news of the too haſty increaſe of their ſon's proſperity, of the means he got at it, and the uſe he made of his power, muſt have ſtruck a kind of deadly terror into them!—They muſt have trembled every day on account of the danger which threatened their ſon; and into what an unſpeakable grief muſt your ſudden fall have thrown them!—How dreadful muſt their expectation be on account of the iſſue of your affairs, and the danger your ſoul is in!—How humiliating to them will be the manner of your death! Will they ever be comforted, and might it not ſhorten their lives? And who is the author of all this? are not you, their ſon!

I had had, for ſeveral days, a letter of the father * of the unfortunate Count in my pocket, and I thought this moment the propereſt to deliver it. The whole letter is as follows:

" I could

* The accounts which are given in news papers and magazines of the father of Count Struenſee being ſo imperfect, and full of miſrepreſentations, the tranſlator, who is perſonally acquainted with him, will give here a ſhort ſketch of his life. D. Adam Struenſee, the father of the Count, was born in the year 1708, at New Ruppin, a ſmall town, in the dominions of the King of Pruſſia. He was ſoon ſent to the grammar ſchool at Brandenburg, where he was till the year 1727, when he went to the univerſity at Halle, which he exchanged the following year for that of Jena. In the year 1730 the Count of Witgenſtein made him one of his chaplains at Berleburg. He was but one year in this ſtation before he

" I could wiſh that theſe lines, if poſſible, may reach you, that you may read and conſider. The me ancholy, grief, and anxiety of your parents, on

was choſen rector of a pariſh in the ſuburbs of Halle, in Saxony. He quitted this living but a few months after for another rectory in the city of Halle, which he likewiſe gave up ſoon after, another living in the ſame city being offered to him, and of which he accepted. He then was made profeſſor in divinity of the Univerſity, in which capacity of profeſſor and rector he got a great name, and became very eminent, and much beloved. In the year 1757, the late King of Denmark gave him the principal rectory at Altona, and appointed him preſident of the eccleſiaſtical conſiſtory of Altona and the county of Pinneberg. His talents and merits promoted him in the year 1760 to one of the moſt eminent preferments in the Lutheran church, for he became preſident of the eccleſiaſtical council, general-ſuperintendant (or biſhop) of the two dukedoms Schleſwig and Holſtein, to which are annexed the deanries of Gottorp, Rendſburg, Huſum, and Schwabſted. He now, at this very time, enjoys all theſe preferments, and his fixed reſidence is at Rendſburg, a fortified town in Holſtein, where the tranſlator viſited him in the year 1766. He is a very perſonable, tall man, has a ſerious countenance, is a good pulpit orator, whoſe diſcourſes are more calculated for edification than for ſhining eloquence. He has the promoting of practical religion particularly in view. Many are his writings and publications, which are moſtly calculated for the ſame purpoſe. He married, in the year 1732, Mary Charles, only daughter of John Charles, then phyſician in ordinary to the Count of Witgenſtein, a lady of ſingular merit, virtue and piety. It is ſaid, that the fate of her ſons affected her ſo much, that ſhe lately died of grief. She was mother of eight children.

1. Eliſabeth, born 1733, and married to a clergyman at Brandenburg.

2. Charles Auguſt, born 1735. He was profeſſor of mathematics at Lignitz, in Sileſia. His brother, the Count, called him in 1771 into Denmark, and made him counſellor of juſtice. He was made priſoner of ſtate with his brother, but afterwards ſet at liberty again. He has publiſhed a well written treatiſe on fortification.

3. John

on account of their ſons *, I am not able to expreſs. Our eyes ſwim in tears, day and night. Our ſouls cry for mercy to God without ceaſing. But I will ſpeak no more of this. There is but one thing which lies heavy upon my mind, and that

3. John Frederick, the unhappy Count, whoſe name will be recorded in the annals of Denmark, was born the fifth of Auguſt, 1737, at Halle. He was educated in the ſchools of the famous orphan houſe of D. Franke, and in the univerſity at Halle, where he ſtudied phyſic. He went with his father to Altona, where he ſoon became royal phyſician of the counties of Ranzau and Pinneberg, and procured himſelf by his profeſſion and induſtry a moderate independency. In the year 1768, the fifth of April, the King of Denmark appointed him to be his phyſician in ordinary, who was to attend him during his travels through Germany, England and France. This laid the foundation of his following proſperity. He got intimately acquainted with the young monarch, was always about him, and inſinuated himſelf into his particular favour. He was made *Lecteur Royal*, and in 1769, the 12th of May, actual counſellor of ſtate. In 1770, the 19th of May, he was appointed counſellor of conference, and *Maitre de requetes*; and in July, 1771, he became prime miniſter. The ſame month he was raiſed to the dignity of a Daniſh Count, and the Queen inveſted him with the order of Matilda. In 1772, the 17th of January, he became priſoner of ſtate, and loſt his life the 28th of April.

4. Samuel Adam, born 1739, lives with his father.

5. Mary, born 1744, is married to a clergyman at Shleſwig.

6. Harriet, born 1745, died very young.

7. Chriſtian, born 1746.

8. Gothilf, born 1752. He ſtudied at Gottingen, but the Count, his brother, called him from thence, and made him lieutenant in the King's guards. He was likewiſe arreſted, but ſet at liberty again under condition of quitting the Daniſh dominions.

* It muſt be remembered, that two brothers of the Count were likewiſe arreſted with him.

that of your much afflicted mother. You know our ſentiments. You know our intention when we educated you. You remember how often and how ſeriouſly we inculcated this great truth, that godlineſs is profitable unto all things.

As often as I had occaſion to ſpeak to you, even then, when you were in a public character, I reminded you of the omnipreſent God, and exhorted you to be careful in preſerving a good conſcience. Your own heart will tell you, how far you have lived up to the exhortations of your father.

It is already a long while that your parents have been in great anxiety about you. Since we lead a retired life, and have very few acquaintance, and you yourſelf have written nothing about your circumſtances, the prayers and ſighs of our ſtraitened hearts have aſcended to God in ſecret, and in our anxiety we cried, that your ſoul might not be loſt. Three different times, at Halle, Gedern, Altona, you were looked upon as a dead man, by thoſe that ſtood about your ſick bed. God has ſaved you and preſerved your life: Certainly with that only intent, to prepare you in this time of grace for an happy eternity. The ſame is now the chief intention of your gracious Redeemer, in your priſon. You are

his

his creature, he loves you, you are redeemed by the blood of Jeſus. God is a reconciled father. You are baptized in the name of the Trinity. He will make an everlaſting covenant with you, and he will not deſiſt from doing good to you. Return to your God, my ſon, he will not hide his face of grace from you. Mind the voice of your conſcience, and the conviction which the Spirit of God produces in your ſoul. Pray to God that he may diſcloſe to you the true inward ſtate of your ſoul, that you, enlightened by God, may ſee how much you are corrupted. Employ the ſolitude you are in now, to ſearch your whole life in the ſight of the all-knowing God, that you may ſee how great and how deteſtable your ſins are. Do not flatter yourſelf. Be rigorous with yourſelf. Accuſe yourſelf and judge yourſelf before the tribunal of God, whilſt you are ſtill enjoying this time of grace.

When you ſhall feel your ſins to be a heavy burden, your heart then will humiliate itſelf before God, you will pray for mercy, and you will ſeriouſly deteſt and abhor your tranſgreſſions. You then will ſee the great importance and neceſſity of the redemption of Chriſt. You then will take refuge in him who receives ſinners, who was made to be ſin for us, who has paid the debts of our ſins, and ſuffered their puniſhment, that

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we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, and might have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace. Still the blood of Chriſt ſpeaks for you. He that is merciful, ſtill ſtretches forth his hands. Without Jeſus there is no ſalvation. He is the cauſe of it. Even for your ſake he has received gifts. You may have in him righteouſneſs for your peace of mind and for your ſanctification. O that Jeſus might be glorified in your heart. In him we have happineſs whilſt we live, whilſt we ſuffer, whilſt we die, and after death.

Your mother gives her love to you. She weeps,—ſhe prays with me, for our unfortunate ſons. My ſon, my ſon, how deeply do you afflict us! Oh! could we but have this only comfort, that our ſons turned with all their heart unto the Lord, and that we with joy might find them again in eternity before the throne of the Lamb!

Your crimes, which brought you into priſon, are not properly and ſufficiently known to us. What is talked of and read in public about you, is of ſuch a nature that your parents condemn and deteſt it. Oh! I wiſh to God, you had remained a phyſician. Of your riſe to honours we were informed by the news papers; but it was

no

no matter of joy to us; we read it with grief. Oh! that you had kept, in all your tranſactions, a clear conſcience with much wiſdom, piety, and humility, for the good of Denmark, and that you might have ſubmitted with all due ſubjection, to all the commands of your Sovereign. We cannot altogether judge about this matter for want of information. But know, that tho' we love our children, we nevertheleſs do not approve of their crimes, nor will we excuſe or palliate them, or call them good; we rather hate all ſins, deteſt, condemn, and abhor them, and praiſe God when he manifeſts his juſt wrath over the wicked, and ſhews his mercy to the repenting and the faithful. The Lord our God be your phyſician in your impriſonment, and cure thoroughly the wounds of your ſoul.

We your parents recommend you to the love of the Lord that has mercy on you. May Jeſus, who is a compaſſionate High-prieſt, remember you for good at the right hand of God, that you may receive mercy before the throne of grace, and be pardoned unto everlaſting ſalvation. Yea, Jeſus! thou great friend of mankind, who wilt in no wiſe caſt out him that comes to thee, help parents and children to life everlaſting!"

*Rendſburg, March* the 4th, 1772.

When I told the Count that I had a letter from his father to him, he took it with a kind of eagerneſs, and began to read. But he had not half finiſhed it, when he laid it down, weeping bitterly. Looking then at me with an air of confidence, he ſaid, " It is impoſſible for me to read any further; I will begin again by and by."

My anſwer was, Read it by yourſelf, and read it often. It is a letter of an honeſt, afflicted, and tender parent. Endeavour to comfort your virtuous father and your pious mother, by a chriſtian-like anſwer. You know very well what alone can comfort them.

" Oh! my God," ſaid he, in a manner which cannot be expreſſed, " I cannot write to them, I do not know how I ſhall act!"

You will have time, replied I, to conſider about this.—He afterwards praiſed his father for being an honeſt man, whoſe actions agreed with his ſentiments, and his mother for being a matron, that deſerved reverence and was really pious. He ſaid, ſhe had given him the beſt opportunity to learn by her own example, practical chriſtianity. He begged of me, " To write ſoon to his parents, to tell them the whole truth how I found him, and to aſſure them that he would do his beſt, and had the beſt intention, to

die

die like a chriſtian."—He was ſo much affected, that he was ſcarcely able to pronounce theſe words.

I had now given him opportunities enough for ſelf-examination. His repentance was really ſincere, and I could truſt in it ſo much the more, as he was a man of cool blood, and one who, through principles and practice, had obtained great power over his paſſions, and who certainly could not have been moved by any thing elſe, but by ſerious remonſtrances of his conſcience. I reminded him of that hope, which he formerly had entertained, that God would ſhew him mercy on account of his philoſophical repentance. I deſired him to tell me whether he thought this ſtill to be true? He hardly knew what to anſwer, but at laſt, he ſaid: "I feel it too much, that I have no grounds for ſuch a hope. I am no more inclined to deceive myſelf."

I now wanted to make him acquainted with the proofs of chriſtianity; for which purpoſe, I had brought him Weſt's Obſervations on the Hiſtory and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. I deſired him to read with attention. And if he ſhould find, that there was the greateſt credibility in the hiſtory of the reſurrection of Chriſt, he then ſhould aſk his reaſon, whether he had no obligation

gation to believe him, that was riſen, to be a meſſenger of God to men, and his doctrine to be true and divine?

*The eighth Conference. March the 16th.*

MY firſt queſtion was: Is it probable that ſins ſhould be puniſhed in a future world which were committed wilfully, which were often repeated, and which were terrible on account of their conſequences?

He anſwered, "That if one looked upon it with mere reaſon, it ſhould ſeem probable that the uneaſineſs of conſcience and the natural conſequences of ſins, were ſufficient for their puniſhment."

Many reaſons being produced on my ſide, and among the reſt, that many went out of this world without any remorſe of conſcience at all; the Count gave his objection up. And when I, at the concluſion of thoſe arguments which are in favour of rewards and puniſhments, propoſed the queſtion: Why even a ſinner who diſapproves of all religion, is at leaſt then afraid, when he ſees certain death before his eyes?

The Count ſaid: "It might perhaps be nothing elſe but that natural fear of death which

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is common to all." But he found afterwards this objection removed by his own experience; for he owned he was now less afraid on account of his death than of his sins. However, he believed he should have died with very little fear, even if we had not got acquainted, and he had not read those books I brought him.

When I endeavoured to prove that mere repentance is not sufficient to satisfy divine justice respecting our crimes, and asked what he would think of a judge who should pardon every criminal when he shewed signs of a serious repentance; he answered, "he should think him to be a good man though a weak one, who was neither just nor wise, and unfit to be a judge."

Upon this, I undertook to convince him that mere repentance, or reparation of damages, or reformation of life, were insufficient to expiate our sins before God: I concluded, that these three mentioned means, which reason recommends for obtaining pardon, are insufficient.

I afterwards told the Count, that though he could not repair the damages he had done, because he was so near eternity, he nevertheless could still do something which resembled, in some respect, a reparation; and this was, that he should endeavour to efface those bad impres-

ſions he had made upon the minds of the people, by ſhewing himſelf now quite a different man in his converſation and his whole behaviour. The Count aſſured me, " that he himſelf already had thought this to be his duty. He had ſpoken to an officer about the moral doctrines of chriſtianity, and exhorted him to obey them ſtrictly. But he had not ſpoken like a fully-convinced chriſtian, for he was none yet, and he thought he had no right to play the hypocrite." He added, " that he heartily wiſhed he could only contribute ſomething towards the reformation of thoſe of his friends, whoſe morals and ſentiments he had corrupted by his example and by his converſation."

When I had proved that faith in Chriſt was the only way for reconciliation, I enquired of him how he had found the evidences of Chriſt's reſurrection.

" You know," anſwered the Count, " that for ſome days paſt my mind has been very uneaſy and my body ſick. I confeſs both have hindered me from reading that part of the book with ſufficient attention, which examines and compares the circumſtances of the reſurrection of Chriſt. However I have found in the latter part the following arguments, which have made a great

great impreſſion upon my underſtanding. The diſciples of Chriſt were not credulous, but were with difficulty convinced of the reſurrection of Chriſt by the unanimous teſtimony of all their ſenſes. The Jews never examined the affair judicially, though they had the beſt opportunity for it, and it was their intereſt to ſhew it was fictitious. I likewiſe look upon the propagation of chriſtianity as another argument of the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection; for if it had not been certain that Chriſt had riſen, chriſtianity could not have ſpread ſo quick and ſo far as it has done. The doctrine of Muhamed is in regard to its propagation not to be compared with chriſtianity. However, I could wiſh to know, whether any teſtimonies for Chriſt's reſurrection are to be met with in heathen authors."

I told him, that Suetonius, Tacitus, Plinius, and Joſephus made mention of Chriſt, though there was a diſpute about the paſſage of the latter being genuine.

"I cannot deny," ſaid the Count, "that Chriſt's reſurrection ſeems to be probable; but it appears to me a little odd, that he, after his reſurrection, did not ſhew himſelf to his enemies."

This objection I endeavoured to remove, by ſhewing that ſuch a teſtimony would have been

of no uſe, and would never have convinced the Jews, on account of their obſtinacy.

The Count being exhorted to pray, he aſſured me that he already frequently prayed. And when he repeated his complaint that his repentance on account of ſome actions, and in relation to ſome perſons, was greater than on account of others, I told him, that this was very natural; that he always would find himſelf more concerned on account of the misfortunes he had brought upon his friends, his parents, his brothers, and Count Brandt.

After ſome ſilence, he ſaid: "I do not know whether error and paſſion might not carry me away a ſecond time, in caſe I ſhould enter the world again. But ſuch as I find myſelf now, I deteſt my extravagancies, even thoſe which gave me pleaſure; and I believe that in caſe I had an opportunity of indulging myſelf again, I ſhould not commit them."

When I exhorted him not to commit any wrong action which he was in his preſent circumſtance capable of doing, and deſired him to be upon his guard againſt telling any untruth before his judges, or apologizing for himſelf when he had no ground for it, or concealing what was true, he anſwered:

"I know

" I know that by a ſincere confeſſion, I gain in the opinion of honeſt men. I am convinced that all my future happineſs, which I now hope to obtain, would be loſt if I ſhould attempt to conceal the truth. I even believe, according to the morals of Chriſt, that a lie, though told with a good intent of promoting chriſtianity and virtue, would be culpable. You therefore may depend upon my telling without reſerve every thing I ſhall think myſelf guilty of."

When I took my leave of him, he ſaid: " I ſee how much you are concerned about my ſalvation; that you love me, and as a ſincere friend want to promote my real good. I look upon you as my only true friend in the world. When ſhall I ſee you again? I am longing for you when you are not here?"—I replied,

The day after to-morrow you will certainly ſee me again; but the nearer the time draws that ſhall decide your fate, the more frequently I ſhall viſit you, and ſtay longer with you.

He ſmiled and ſaid: " I hope you will not fall ſick."

I gave him to-day *Bonnet's philoſophical Examination of the Arguments of Chriſtianity.*

*The ninth Conference. March the eighteenth.*

I NOW recommended Scripture to the Count. The New Teſtament, ſaid I, gives the moſt perfect information, and the Old Teſtament agrees with the New, particularly in that chief point of man's redemption. I pointed out and explained ſeveral paſſages of the prophets which correſpond with the evangeliſts, and drew the inference, that even this muſt prepoſſeſs us greatly in favour of the truth of the Goſpel hiſtory. The Count replied:

" If one had a mind to entertain ſuſpicion, one might ſay Chriſt had formed himſelf after the character of the Meſſias, as it was drawn by the prophets, to act the part of this great perſonage."

I anſwered: If he had had a mind for doing this, he would have acted his part conſentaneous with the prejudices of the Jews, and appeared in the character of a worldly hero.

" To be ſure, (was his anſwer) he then would have employed quite different means. It is impoſſible for an impoſtor to act thoroughly the part of an honeſt man. Beſides, there are prophecies, which, in regard of their being fulfilled, did

did not depend entirely upon Chriſt. For inſtance: the caſting lots over his garments, and his being crucified. One as well as the other depended on accidental circumſtances. If the Romans had not been at that time maſters of Jeruſalem, he might not have been crucified, but rather been ſtoned to death."

We examined hereupon thoſe Scripture paſſages which treat on the redemption of men by Chriſt. I endeavoured to prove that this redemption, as it is taught in Scripture, does not contradict any of God's attributes, but is in all reſpects adapted and ſuitable to the condition of men.—This being done, after it had taken up much of our time, I entreated the Count moſt earneſtly to get convinced of this chief doctrine of chriſtianity, that there is no ſalvation without Chriſt, and to adopt it for his own everlaſting welfare. He ſaid, "he ſhould raiſe no difficulties, but ſhould do as much as he could to get convinced of a doctrine which muſt be of ſo great importance to him. He had no other hopes but from this quarter only, and why ſhould he therefore not be deſirous of partaking thereof."

I found him at once greatly moved again. He complained with tears in his eyes—"that

his old idea of a total annihilation of our whole exiſtence after death, would return now and then and make him uneaſy."

I told him it was very difficult to eradicate old ideas we were formerly ſo much pleaſed with: But I hoped he would always get the better of them, if he kept thoſe arguments in view which he had found convincing in thoſe books he had read upon this ſubject.

He then aſked me: "If I never had entertained any doubts about eternity?" No! was my anſwer; I always found it ſuitable to my wiſhes. I got early acquainted with its proofs.

Upon the Count's complaining that he ſtill was afraid his repentance might not be ſincere enough; I adviſed him to do juſt ſuch actions as were oppoſite to his former vices, and to mind every opportunity which was left for him of doing good. I ſaid I would propoſe ſomething to him. The propoſal was, that ſince he was very ſorry for having many of his former friends prepoſſeſſed againſt religion by communicating to them his principles, he ſhould renounce theſe principles publickly. He ſhould give an account to the world of the ſentiments in which he intended to die, and of the manner they took place.

" This is what I ſhall do," replied he; " I will conſider in what manner I could draw this up to make it moſt uſeful."—Laſtly he wiſhed, " that he might have a lively ſenſation of the comfort of religion:" He ſaid, " he prayed heartily to God for it." I told him, God would grant him his wiſhes, and it would follow in courſe the more he got convinced of the truth of the chriſtian religion, and of the ſincerity of the alteration in his ſentiments.

He anſwered: " I hope to get convinced. I formerly thought that whoever embraced chriſtianity was to renounce all reaſon; but I now ſee plainly, that nothing ſtands more to reaſon than chriſtianity; and I promiſe you, that I will do my utmoſt to make my ſentiments conformable to the will of God."

I then continued: Your mind will grow eaſy, and you will feel the comforts of the Goſpel. But, nevertheleſs, you may feel anxiety and fear towards the latter end of your life, and upon the way to the ſcaffold. I tell you this before-hand, leſt you may think religion could not comfort us when we are to die. Natural fear of death, the terrifying circumſtances your's will be attended with, and your being conſcious that you by your crimes brought yourſelf to it, will not

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be altogether removed. But by the aſſiſtance of religion, you will have a calm and hopeful proſpect into eternity.

He had now finiſhed Bonnet's book which I had left with him, and declared it had given him great ſatisfaction. And ſince Rouſſeau had been his favorite author, and I feared his objections againſt Chriſt's miracles might appear to him of conſequence, I gave him *Claperede on the miracles of the Goſpel*, to let him ſee how weak Rouſſeau's objections are againſt facts.

*The tenth Conference. March the twentieth.*

MY intention by this conference was to convince the Count that reaſon could make no objections of any conſequence againſt the doctrine of the redemption of the world by Chriſt.

" I myſelf," ſaid the Count, " have been thinking already on this ſubject. Perhaps God will try our intentions towards his precepts, by demanding our faith in favour of this doctrine of redemption. And if this ſhould be the caſe, it is a ſufficient reaſon for us to believe it."

Hereupon I proved that the doctrine of redemption glorifies the divine perfections, and is abſo-

abſolutely neceſſary to human happineſs. At the concluſion of my arguments I entreated the Count to profeſs himſelf a chriſtian by believing in Chriſt. Ceaſe, ſaid I, good Count, to be an unhappy man. Believe in Jeſus, and your ſins will be forgiven you. Your death will open you the door into a bleſſed eternity.

Here enſued a ſcene which was moving to me beyond deſcription. Never felt I ſuch joy. Never have I been ſo ſure of the happineſs of having brought back a ſinner from his errors! I ſhall never forget this ſolemn and joyful hour, and never ceaſe to praiſe God for it.

"I ſhould be guilty of the greateſt folly," ſaid the Count, "if I would not embrace chriſtianity with joy, when its arguments are ſo over-balancing, and when it breathes ſuch general benevolence. Its effects upon my heart are too ſtrong. Oftentimes I cannot help crying when I read the hiſtory of Chriſt. I think already with hope on my death. I have acquainted myſelf with its moſt terrifying circumſtances. I do not know how I ſhall be when the awful hour comes. At preſent I am not uneaſy about it; I find nothing that makes me anxiouſly wiſh for this life. I will confidently expect forgiveneſs of my ſins through Chriſt. And to you, my dear

friend, I am infinitely obliged that you have brought me ſo far."

I embraced him, and exhorted him to thank God for it. We prayed together.—

I would now have left him, but he begged of me to ſtay half an hour longer, which I did.

He complained that his former idea, that there perhaps was no eternity, now and then returned to him; (and in fact it did not leave him entirely until a few days before his death.) He ſaid, with a kind of indignation and grief: "Sometimes I think again; ſuppoſe my former idea was true, that we have no exiſtence after death? But I comfort myſelf by thinking, that I abhor this idea; and that I am ſenſible it would be a very unhappy proſpect if all my wiſhes and expectations of futurity ſhould be vain. I tremble when this melancholy thought diſturbs me, and I arm myſelf againſt it by recollecting the various convincing proofs which are alledged in favour of chriſtianity as well as of a future ſtate. I am now fully determined to follow the ſame rule in my new principles which I had laid down in regard to my former ones. For my intention was, to think on the approach of death in the following manner: I have examined my idea that every thing ceaſes with this life, and I have

I have found it to be true. Therefore, if I ſhould die, nothing ſhall make me think otherwiſe; and I will die with a confidence, that, in caſe I ſhould be wrong, God is a benevolent being who will forgive my error. But I ſee now that my former notions of God's mercy are unworthy of the Supreme Being. I have now examined chriſtianity with greater exactneſs than I ever did my old ſyſtem, and by this examination I am convinced of its truth. I therefore will remain firm. Neither my old ſyſtem, nor new doubts, ſhall henceforth ſtagger me."

He then, after ſome queſtions about the inſpired writers, told me, that he now was frequently reading the Bible ſince I had given him one. He ſaid, "he ſhould like to know what reaſons there were to believe the ſacred books were really written by thoſe authors to whom they are aſcribed."

For this very purpoſe I had brought with me D. Leſs's * book on the truth of the chriſtian religion. I deſired him to read it, and he would find ſufficient hiſtorical proofs to believe that the books of the New Teſtament were really

* The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, by *D. Leſs*, Profeſſor and Doctor of Divinity at Gottingen. *Bremen*, 1768. 8vo.

really the writings of thoſe evangeliſts and apoſtles to whom they were attributed.

He told me after this, that he frequently prayed to God to enlighten and confirm him in truth. He added, "I am ſure God will hear my prayers and bleſs my endeavours."

*The eleventh Conference. March the 21ſt.*

I FOUND him reading D. Leſs's book on the truth of the chriſtian religion, and he ſaid: "It was ſomething remarkable that there were ſo very few evidences in the firſt century of the authenticity of the books of the New Teſtament." To which I replied, that it was owing partly to the books of the New Teſtament having been written either about the middle, or towards the end of the firſt century, and that for this very reaſon but very few copies could be taken; partly that there were but few writers of the firſt century that had an opportunity of mentioning any thing concerning the authenticity of the writings of the apoſtles.

The Count ſaid further: "That from the ſhort mention made in this book of the chief deiſtical writings, he found that the objections againſt revelation were but very trifling, and that

that he was aſhamed of having ſuffered himſelf to be impoſed upon by ſuch inſignificant objections. He never imagined that chriſtianity was founded upon ſuch ſtrong arguments, and that they would convince him."—He then ſpoke much in praiſe of thoſe books he had read during his impriſonment; particularly of Gellert's Lectures on morality. He wiſhed that thoſe who had been ſeduced by him from virtue might read them. He ſaid, he had in this reſpect Count Brandt particularly in view, and added; "I hear that he ſtill is very gay, but I imagine it would make a great impreſſion upon his mind if he was told how my ſentiments are altered. Though he has not been more virtuous than I have, yet he always had a better opinion of religion than I had. Would you be ſo kind as to go to him, and tell him how you find me, and beg him to be now at laſt a little more ſerious? Or would you rather write to him?"

I anſwered, there are difficulties both ways, which may be avoided if you will charge the clergyman who attends Count Brandt with this meſſage. Are you ready and inclined to do this?

"Yes," ſaid he, "bring the Dean Hee to me, I will beg this favour of him in your preſence. I am not aſhamed to confeſs what I am

ſo

ſo well convinced of. I wiſh I had an opportunity to tell it to all my former acquaintance."

Here he told the truth, for hitherto he had ſaid nothing to the officers who guarded him; but now he began to entertain them frequently with religious converſations. He ſaid: "that he had been recommending religion and a virtuous life to an officer, and his anſwer was: He had nothing to ſay againſt religion; but to obey its precepts in regard to ſenſual pleaſures and luſts, ſeemed to him impracticable. He then, by quoting his own example, ſhewed him how neceſſary he himſelf had now found theſe things to be, and how unhappy they had made him. He had intreated him to read Gellert often, who would convince him how uſeful it was to conquer even our favorite ſins."

He added: "What difference is there between that virtue which chriſtianity demands, and that which the world calls an honeſt life? If mere worldly people, that think in the ſame manner as I have done formerly, ſhould judge of my actions according to their ſyſtem of morality, I believe they would think them to be honeſt enough, as I did formerly myſelf."

You muſt even now, ſaid I, take great care not to think too well of ſome of your actions; to which he replied:

" I know very well that reſpecting all my actions, which I thought to ariſe from good intentions, ambition and voluptuouſneſs had as great a ſhare in them as my love towards that which is good. I count them nothing before God and my conſcience. When in my former ſituation, I fancied to act well and deſerving of praiſe, I thought like the Phariſee in the Goſpel."

From this time, I obſerved in the Count, a certain calmneſs and ſerenity of mind, which ſeemed to ariſe from the hopes that God for Chriſt's ſake would pardon him. This ſituation of his mind had been particularly viſible to his judges in his laſt examination. They had not ſeen him ſince the time I had viſited him, and could therefore better obſerve the alteration, than I, who had converſed with him ſo often during this time. One of them told me, that he had behaved on his examination extremely well, and had appealed once with a viſible joy to that bleſſed eternity he hoped to enter into. He had been among them as among his friends, and had talked about his affairs as one who ſpeaks about

indifferent things. His conduct had been very moving to them all.

But since it appeared to me as if he expected still a certain particular sensation of his being pardoned before God, I endeavoured to set him to rights in this point. I told him, that with regard to these sensations, the matter was very uncertain. I would not absolutely deny their existence, but I found no Scripture proofs that they were either necessary or to be expected as certain consequences of repentance and faith. The best and most certain conviction of our being pardoned before God was, to be conscious that we repent of our sins sincerely, that we acknowledge Christ to be our Redeemer, that we perceive our progress in godliness, and that we most earnestly endeavour to conform our sentiments and our actions to the will of God. Whoever thinks other sensations to be necessary, is in danger of being carried away by enthusiasm.

He then answered me, " That he never could bear enthusiasm in religion, and that this was one great reason that had made him averse from christianity." He said, " He remembered still, that once in that public school *, where he had received his instruction in religion, some hun-

* The Orphan-house at Hall.

dreds of young people were at once given out to be illuminated and converted, though he himſelf was ſure, that ſome of them, with whom he was nearly acquainted, were very immoral and wicked. Many ſtrange things had been tranſacted by theſe converted boys; ſo that he and others that were not among the number, could not help being greatly ſcandalized on account of religion."—

I promiſed to bring him Spalding's book on the value of the inward feelings in Chriſtianity, that he might inform himſelf more on this point.

*The twelfth Conference. March the 24th.*

D. HEE, whom I had told of the Count's deſire to ſpeak to him, came to-day with me. The Count was not aſhamed to confeſs the miſtakes of his underſtanding and his heart. He told the Dean minutely, how he had firſt quitted virtue and afterwards abandoned religion, and in what manner he had recovered from his errors. He expreſſed his fear, that his friend Count Brandt, through his natural vivacity, might be hindred from conſidering ſeriouſly on religion and the condition he was now in. But Count Brandt having always believed more of religion, than he himſelf, and ſhewn this even in his converſation, he hoped it would not only be agreeable

to him, to hear that he himſelf was now better informed and convinced, but that it would even make a happy impreſſion upon his mind. Formerly he would not hearken to Count Brandt, when he wanted to ſpeak to him about religion, but that he now thought it his duty to let him know his preſent ſentiments. He looked upon himſelf ſo much more obliged to it, ſince he was acceſſary to his misfortunes.

The Count afterwards continued his converſation thus. " I have been reading the book of D. Leſs, particularly that part which treats on the miracles, reported to have been wrought at the tomb of the Abbé de Paris. I wonder why this affair, that has made ſo much noiſe at Paris, is not by command properly enquired into. I remember myſelf, when I was phyſician at Altona, that I was called upon to examine the ſtate of a perſon that was ſubject to convulſions, by which means I ſaw the unexpected and wonderful effects which an extravagant fancy can produce. Such things as the pretended miracles of the Abbé de Paris, ſhould not raiſe any doubts againſt the miracles of the Goſpel. But I have other doubts, which appear to me of greater weight. However, I am reſolved to think on them no more, for it is enough for me, after a calm examination, to have found the arguments for

chriſtianity

chriſtianity unexceptionable. Would to God I had time to make myſelf further acquainted with it, and to put it into practice."

He complained that this morning, when he was reading the Goſpel of St. Matthew, many blaſphemies againſt Chriſt and the Virgin Mary came into his mind again, which he had formerly read in ſome deiſtical book. "Now," ſaid he, "I deſpiſe ſuch things, though formerly perhaps they might have raiſed ſcurrilous thoughts, and hindred my progreſs towards truth."

I brought him Spalding's book on the value of inward feelings in chriſtianity *. I told him, that I hoped the reading of it would make religion appear to him in a ſtill more amiable light, when he found, how much it was adapted to the nature of the ſoul, and ſtood not in need of incomprehenſibilities, of effects without a cauſe, of apparitions, concerning which it remains always matter of doubt, whether they are becoming the wiſdom of God. He anſwered:

"This is what I hope likewiſe. Revelation muſt not contradict reaſon, ſince God has given it to rational beings. The more ſound and ſolid

* Thoughts on the value of inward feelings in Chriſtianity. By John Joachim Spalding, Dean of Berlin. Leipſic. 1764. Second edit.

reaſon calls it under examination, the more muſt it profit by it. If thoſe things which men have foiſted into religion, were left out in the pulpit and dogmatical writings, almoſt all the weapons of the deiſts would become blunted. I remember very well how much many, perhaps well intended ſermons, which I heard at Halle have confirmed my unbelief. It was too plain to me, that thoſe things which were told me there could not be truths revealed by God, though it was confidently aſſerted that they were."

*The thirteenth Conference. March the 25th.*

I COULD ſtay but a ſhort time with the Count. The following is the moſt remarkable part of our converſation:

" The Count mentioned ſome objections againſt chriſtianity, which he had read in *Boulanger antiquité devoilée*, that fear was the origin of all religion among the ancients. All calamities which could befal men, as earthquakes, fires, inundations, war, &c. they uſed to look upon as puniſhments of their gods, though they aroſe from natural cauſes; and to appeaſe the wrath of their deities they became to think of religion. He at that time believed Boulanger to have proved his aſſertions very clearly from hiſtory."

I told

I told him that Boulanger was a writer of no credit, authority, or knowledge, either in antiquity, hiſtory or languages. An idiot and a charletan. A man who told untruth, contradicted himſelf, &c. like another author who wrote the *Evangile du jour*, where he in one place proves, that there was no Moſes, becauſe an antient writer Sanchoniaton did not make mention of him, though he lived in the neighbourhood where the hiſtory was tranſacted in which Moſes was concerned. And in another place, in order to make Moſes a writer of later date, it is aſſerted that Sanchoniaton lived long before him. To which the Count replied: "That Voltaire was dangerous and captivating merely from wit and humour."

When I was leaving the Count, he expreſſed his deſire to inform in perſon Count Brandt of his preſent ſentiments about religion, and to tell him of his reformation. He ſaid, "He ſhould do this in the court of juſtice, if they ſhould happen to be both confronted; but he doubted that this would not be the caſe, ſince their confeſſions agreed together. Therefore, he ſhould beg leave to viſit him, and to tell him the ſame before witneſſes. If I were to tell it him myſelf, it would make a greater impreſſion upon him; and his condition grieves me ſo much, that I would

willingly contribute all that is in my power towards his reformation."

*The fourteenth Conference. March the 26th.*

"I WISH," said he, when I came in, "to have done with those affairs I have now upon my hands; for they hinder the regular continuation of our conferences, and keep me from reading. However, I hope to finish them soon. I know, I want all my time for weightier concerns of my soul. Nevertheless I have finished D. Less, and I owe much to this book. It has brought my certainty to a higher degree, on account of the credibility of the miracles, and I can prove now the truth of the christian religion from miracles. The book is written with great solidity. The Germans begin to excell in this kind of writing."

I told him, we had another excellent original of this sort, D. Nosselt's Defence of the Christian Religion; which he, if time would permit it, might read with great advantage.

We then talked of some prophesies, which concerned not Christ in particular, but whole nations, how far they were fulfilled.

The calmness and serenity of the Count's mind encreased now so much, that it appeared to me rather a little suspicious. I therefore thought it

necessary

neceſſary to remind him, not to be carried away by a too quickly produced compoſure of mind, and not to forget, ſince he had hopes of being pardoned before God, what he had been before his converſion: elſe his former careleſſneſs might gain power over him again, and obſtruct his endeavours of conforming himſelf to the will of God, which might cauſe him a great deal of uneaſineſs towards the latter days of his life.

"I aſſure you," was his anſwer, "that I have not for one moment judged myſelf indulgently, and that hitherto I have not ceaſed to repent of my former life ſeriouſly. I am rather convinced, that even in eternity, happy as it might turn out for me, I ſhall remember my ſins with horror and deteſtation."

On another occaſion, he aſked, what might be the reaſon that phyſicians were ſo eaſily prejudiced againſt religion?

I know, ſaid I, that the religion of phyſicians is commonly looked upon as ſuſpicious; but I think without reaſon. You yourſelf muſt know many great phyſicians that are, without contradiction, profeſſed chriſtians. Boerhaave, Stahl, Junker, Hofmann, Werlhof, were all chriſtians. You are acquainted with Mead's writings in favour of religion. Haller has but lately pub-

liſhed a book in behalf of chriſtianity, which I ſhould give you to read if it was to be had here already. Our Berger, what a profeſſed, pious confeſſor of religion is he!

"Zimmerman* likewiſe, added he, is a chriſtian. And you muſt, upon the whole, not think that I brought this thought upon the carpet as a thing of any real conſequence. It is of as little ſignification as the opinion I have heard maintained, that Michaelis and Semler were deiſts."

If they really were ſuch, replied I, they hardly would give themſelves ſo much trouble in promoting chriſtianity as they really do. This no doubt is an accuſation of intolerant chriſtians, which is ſufficiently refuted by the ſervice which theſe men are of to religion.

## *The fifteenth Conference. March the 27th.*

THE Count having ſhewed a deſire to know ſomething more about prophecies, and their being fulfilled, I brought him, for this

* D. Zimmerman is phyſician in ordinary to his Britannic Majeſty at Hanover. Some of his writings are lately tranſlated into Engliſh, particularly his *Eſſay on National Pride*, and his *Treatiſe on the Dyſentery*.

purpoſe,

purpoſe, Newton's Diſſertations on Prophecies. Among many things he ſaid:

" I find now of how great importance that moral rule is, to avoid the firſt ſin. If we do not do this, but allow ourſelves to delight in thinking of irregular deſires, without oppoſing the firſt emotion of them, it is frequently afterwards no more in our power to act well and virtuous. I know this by my own experience. It ſeemed to me by far too ſevere, when Chriſt ſays, Whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart. The looking on a woman, thought I, even with a deſire to luſt after her, can be no crime if it goes no further. But the ruminating upon means how to ſatisfy our deſires, follow in courſe. Whenever I ſaw means to get my ends, I fancied it very hard if I ſhould not make uſe of them. I did uſe them, I ſatisfied my luſt, and committed a whole ſeries of ſins, which I might have eſcaped, if I had avoided the firſt ſin, the taking delight in the wicked deſire, and ſtudiouſly entertaining it. I then endeavoured to apologize for my crimes. I cannot help it, ſaid I, that my natural diſpoſition and temper is ſo much for voluptuouſneſs; it therefore cannot be imputed to me as a crime if I live according to this my diſpoſition. I was confirmed in this by that over-

overbearing ſeverity of thoſe who taught me morals in my youth. They never told me that Chriſt did not forbid innocent things, and that his morals did not deny us harmleſs joys. Every thing I had an inclination for, was told me to be ſin, without diſtinction. To wear ruffles, to powder the hair, was declared to be as equally impious as other extravagancies which were openly ſinful. I now concluded, that ſince it was impoſſible that the firſt mentioned things could be ſins, and I found they could not be well avoided in the world, it perhaps might be the ſame caſe with the others; they might alſo be innocent things, and not to be avoided. I know I was in the wrong; but I was young, my paſſions raged, and my leaders ſhould have had more underſtanding."

He added: "In the ſame manner much harm is done by thoſe teachers of chriſtianity who require always a blind obedience, and do not lay proofs before their hearers of that authority upon which they ſhall build their belief in adopting theſe truths.—He ſaid it was neceſſary that a teacher ſhould prove the Bible to be a divine revelation: and that whoever would take only proper time, and was not againſt the trouble of meditating, could never examine chriſtianity without being convinced of its truth. Every thing

thing is naturally and well connected, and recommends itſelf to a mind given to reflexion. I never found in deiſtical writings a ſyſtem ſo well connected; and, upon the whole, I am inclined to believe that there is no ſuch thing as a regular ſyſtem of infidelity."

He continued: "No objection can be made to chriſtianity, becauſe it promiſes rewards to its true profeſſors. Love of God, without any relation to ourſelves, is but a mere idea. I am ſenſible that I could not continue for a long while to love a friend, who ſhewed himſelf always cold towards me. And the Supreme Being cannot be diſpleaſed with a love, that minds at the ſame time our own intereſt: for God can reap no advantage from our inclination towards him, but only we ourſelves. And why ſhould we not look out for rewards and accept of them, when God himſelf has offered and promiſed them?"

"My great delight in ſenſual pleaſures perſuaded me always, that as there was nothing of this kind among the joys of heaven, they would have no charms for me."

*The ſixteenth Conference. March the 28th.*

"I HAVE now finiſhed," ſaid the Count, "the Acts of the Apoſtles, and by this means am informed of the wonderful foundation of the church of Chriſt. It is very viſible that a higher hand promoted this work. For otherwiſe, how could all this have been done in ſo ſhort a time, by ſuch perſons as the apoſtles were, and in ſpite of ſuch an oppoſition from all ſides? One thing rather raiſed my ſurprize. I found that Paul and Peter once did not quite agree. But when on the other ſide I perceived how much they agreed in the chief point of Chriſt's reſurrection, of repentance and faith, this matter no longer puzzled me. They were men, and therefore might be miſtaken in their private opinions."

"Now and then," ſaid he, "I cannot help thinking on my ſituation before my fall. This morning I aſked myſelf, whether it would not have been better for me, if I could have kept myſelf in my high ſtation, and enjoyed my uſual pleaſures? But when I had been conſidering for a few minutes, I found that I now am by far more happy than I was in my greateſt outward proſperity.

proſperity. I have frequently told my friend Count Brandt that I was by no means happy, when he believed me in many reſpects better off than himſelf. You cannot think what an infinite number of things always took up my time. Whatever happened abroad made me uneaſy. I was obliged to think of means for my own ſafety, and to force myſelf to conceal my uneaſineſs both from myſelf and others. The day I ſpent in diſagreeable occupations and tedious diſſipations, and part of the night in reading ſtate papers, and in writing. Was it poſſible for me to be happy in ſuch a ſituation? Now I am more ſerene and more eaſy. I occupy myſelf with religion, which intereſts me much, and which is my only comfort. I have an hopeful proſpect in eternity, and my death does not diſquiet me much, and not very often. How I may be affected at a more trying criſis, I do not know, but I am convinced of my being now happy and compoſed, and that I am not deſirous of returning into my former ſituation."

*The ſeventeenth Conference. March the 30th.*

"THE more, ſaid the Count, I learn chriſtianity from Scripture, the more I grow convinced, how unjuſt thoſe objections are which it

it is charged with. I find, for inſtance, that all which Voltaire ſays of the intolerance of the chriſtians, and of bloodſhedding cauſed by chriſtianity, is a very unjuſt charge laid upon religion. It is eaſily to be ſeen, that thoſe cruelties, ſaid to be cauſed by religion, if properly conſidered, were the production of human paſſions, ſelfiſhneſs and ambition, and that religion ſerved in ſuch caſes only for a cloak. To be convinced of this, one may read only the hiſtory of the cruel tranſactions of the Spaniards in America."

Having finiſhed reading Newton on Prophecies, he made ſome remarks upon this argument in favour of the truth of the chriſtian religion, and then concluded: " My affairs of this world are now finiſhed, a few conferences with my defenſor, and a few letters, which I intend to write, excepted."

I then told him, that we now could regularly carry on our conferences, and ſaid, Let us now conſcientiouſly employ the reſt of our time in promoting the great buſineſs of your ſalvation. He replied:

" This certainly I ſhall do with all poſſible earneſtneſs. Thank God! I am fully convinced of the truth of the chriſtian religion, and I feel its power in quieting my conſcience and reform-

ing

ing my ſentiments. I hope God will forgive me thoſe doubts which perhaps might ſtart in my mind, and thoſe ſlight emotions of my former paſſions by which I was ruled, and which even now ſometimes will diſturb me. I find no pleaſure in them, and endeavour to ſuppreſs them immediately. I am ready to convince you by any fact you may demand of me to ſhow how ready I am to ſacrifice my former affections. Never ſhould I have done ſo before I was enlightened by religion. I do not know whether this is ſufficient reaſon for you to be ſatisfied with me. Try me in what manner you ſhall think proper: and if you are ſatisfied with me, do not mind if others ſhould judge otherwiſe, according to their opinon, and ſay you had attempted to bring me over by reaſoning. I acknowledge it with gratitude before God, that you took this method. In no other manner you would have prevailed upon me. I ſhould have oppoſed with obſtinacy. Perhaps ſome impreſſion might have been made upon me, but a ſolid and laſting conviction never would have been brought about. Beſides, God cannot be diſpleaſed, ſince religion is ſo reaſonable, that men are gained over by reaſon. Chriſt himſelf acted ſo, and Paul accommodated himſelf at Athens, and before Felix and Agrippa, to the

way of thinking of thoſe he had to deal with. I hope the manner, in which I came to alter my ſentiments in regard to religion and virtue, will raiſe the attention of thoſe that think as I formerly did. The deiſts will never truſt the converſion of their brethren, which is brought about in the latter days of their life. They ſay, they are taken by ſurprize through the declamation of the clergyman; they have loſt their reaſon; they are ſtupid or frantic by the violence of their illneſs; the fear of death made them ignorant of what they did.—But now ſince I came to learn chriſtianity, in the manner I did, nobody ſhall ſay ſo. I have examined the chriſtian religion during a good ſtate of health, and with all the reaſon I am maſter of. I tried every argument, I felt no fear, I have taken my own time, and I have not been in haſte. The chief buſineſs which I, for the ſake of my own mind's eaſe, have ſtill to tranſact is, to ſearch whether I find thoſe ſigns within me, which are required, if upon a good foundation, I believe myſelf to be pardoned before God."

I gave him a letter of his pious mother, which he took with an air of tenderneſs and tranquillity. " He ſaid, he ſhould read it, when alone."—

He

He added: "I never felt my love to my parents ſo great, as now. I never was ſo fully convinced of their good intentions towards me. And my good mother! (here a flood of tears broke forth) She always has loved me with a kind of preference."

The following is the letter.

*Rendſburg, March* the 17th, 1772.

"Inſtead of entertaining you with our mutual grief and pain, I rather find myſelf under a neceſſity to acquaint you, with thoſe prevalent feelings of my heart, on account of that condition you are in at preſent. Many days and years the ſubject of my prayers to God has been, that he might ſave your immortal ſoul from everlaſting ruin. I have therefore now ſacrificed my deſires, which made me, as a mother, wiſh for the happineſs of my children, not only of their ſouls, but likewiſe of their body. If the mercy of God cannot otherwiſe reach the welfare of your ſoul, but by means that are hard and painful to the outward man, I have ſubmitted with an humble and compoſed mind, to the moſt holy and moſt perfect will of the Lord who had mercy upon us from everlaſting. But never

could I expect that doleful ſituation you are in now. My maternal heart is thereby cruſhed to pieces, and as it were immured alive. God is my refuge. My ſole comfort under ſo hard ſufferings, will be the ſalvation of your ſoul. I ſhall praiſe the Almighty with tears of joy, when I hear he, as the friend of ſinful men, has ſtill thoughts of peace over you, and that he with thorns has ſhut up the way which could lead you to everlaſting ruin. I do not doubt but the Spirit of God has convinced your mind already, that your Redeemer would not have you loſt for ever, ſince you are his property. Give but farther attention to that work of grace which the Holy Spirit is doing within your ſoul, for the ſake of your conviction. He will reveal to you more, than the tongues of men can make you acquainted with. Think you have to do with nobody, but God and yourſelf, and remove therefore all your thoughts from things of this world. If the Spirit of God ſhall have only firſt glorified Chriſt within you; if you have been brought ſo far as to apply to yourſelf his fully ſufficient redemption; you then will count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus your Lord: you then will count it but dung, that you may win Chriſt. Your eternal and immortal mind will enjoy already

ready here more eaſe, comfort, and joy, than ever the world, with all its ſplendor and pleaſure, can afford us. It has pleaſed God to convince my ſoul of this from my youth. There is no happier ſtate in the world than to be a true chriſtian, both in good and evil days. How much would it have pleaſed me, if all my children had likewiſe let this bleſſed conviction be produced within them by the Spirit of God from their youth. But I have found, that this is only a work of God, and not of men. Now, my dear ſon, what may have been not properly conducted or neglected by men, let us be truly ſorry for, and beg God's forgiveneſs. But do not deſpair of God's mercy, which he has ſo clearly revealed in Chriſt our Redeemer. Let us not leſſen God's intentions, but give a faithful aſſent to thoſe true aſſertions of Scripture: "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life." But all theſe doctrines are ſuch, that mere human reaſon can neither clear them up ſufficiently nor convince us thereof. You muſt beg for the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt: for it is he that reveals unto us by his word, Chriſt and the great work of his redemption, in a ſalutary manner. If you

will only ſet about an examination of the chief doctrines of our holy religion, with candid and ſincere intentions, and earneſt prayer to God for the enlightening of your underſtanding, you will find breaking forth a light in your ſoul, which is more than mere natural, and which will ſerve you for better inſight, and greater confirmation of theſe doctrines. I write this after the ſmall ſhare of knowledge, which the grace of God has granted me. My faith has, notwithſtanding all the literal knowledge of the revealed truth, been obliged to work through the moſt ſpecious objections. But praiſed be the Lord and his Spirit, who has ſtrengthened my faith by his word, and by my own inward experience of its truth, that even the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it, as long as I keep cloſe to the Omnipotent God, and rid not myſelf of him. And this is my anchor in theſe my higheſt ſufferings, elſe the waves of my diſtreſſes would ſoon ſet adrift the veſſel of my faith. I wiſh and beg to God, that he may grant you this ſupport of your faith. Jeſus Chriſt is, and remains for ever, the true corner-ſtone, upon which the ſtructure of our ſalvation is to be begun and to be finiſhed. From your infancy you ſhewed a character of mind that was ſincere and without diſguiſe. Let this natural

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good diſpoſition of yours be ſanctified by the Holy Spirit, that you may turn to your God with all ſincerity. For God proſpers the honeſt. Bleſſed is the man in whoſe ſpirit there is no guile. Learn how deeply you are corrupted, and come then as a curſed ſinner to him who was made a curſe for us. Your father and I will both cry to God and implore his mercy for you. I remain your heartily afflicted mother," &c.

D. Hee came to day again to ſee the Count, and to tell him, that Count Brandt greatly rejoiced to hear of his converſion. That he found his only comfort in religion, that he never loſt all ſenſe of it, and that he from his heart forgave him all that he had done to draw him into his misfortunes. Count Struenſee gave his anſwer very affectingly, and D. Hee took his leave.

*The eighteenth Conference. March the 31ſt.*

MY readers will remember that the Count had already adopted the doctrine of Chriſt's redemption, and was therefore a chri-

ſtian. He was now ready to acknowledge the other myſteries of religion, which are connected with this doctrine, to be divine. I thought it nevertheleſs neceſſary to ſhew him how reaſonable and uſeful they were, that by this his belief might be the better grounded, and that no doubts on account of thoſe myſteries might make him uneaſy. I made therefore firſt the following general obſervations on the ſubject.

If it has pleaſed God, ſaid I, to reveal himſelf to men through Chriſt, his intention was, either to reſtore natural religion among men, which was nearly loſt, and to lay before men, with the higheſt authority, thoſe truths, which were diſperſed in thouſands of human writings; or to reveal them doctrines, which were unknown to mere reaſon, though very neceſſary to be known for the happineſs of men. Perhaps God had both theſe intentions.

The firſt of them was certainly very beneficent towards mankind, and particularly worthy of God. The knowledge of natural religion was only to be met with among the Jews, and perhaps a few heathen philoſophers. The end of revelation therefore was to reſtore this ſalutary knowledge, and to adapt it to the capacity of

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all men. But this was not the whole of the intention; for if Jeſus was to teach only natural religion, the preparations, which God made to procure credit for his meſſenger among men, ſeem to be too great. The doctrines which Chriſt preached in this reſpect, were of ſuch a nature, that mere human reaſon, as ſoon as it got acquainted with them, muſt find them clear and true. Therefore if this had been all, it was unneceſſary to confirm the doctrine by means of ſo many miracles, particularly Chriſt's reſurrection, and the inſpiration of his Apoſtles.

It appears from this, that it was the intention of God, that Chriſt ſhould reveal unto us doctrines which were unknown to reaſon, at the ſame time that he was to teach us natural religion: and ſince he has done both, it is a proof that both was the intention of his coming. Miracles became now neceſſary to ſerve him for credentials of being a meſſenger of God, and to convince men that thoſe new revealed doctrines which Chriſt preached, and were above human reaſon, came from God. You ſee from this, that a religion, whoſe author performed miracles, muſt, according to its intention, contain myſteries.

Beſides,

Beſides, the incomprehenſible doctrines of the chriſtian religion are of ſuch a nature, that they inform us more fully of God and his will, and how a ſinful man can be ſaved. In both reſpects, it teaches us more than reaſon does. For inſtance, reaſon tells us the unity of God, and revelation adds, that Three Perſons are in one Deity. Reaſon looks out in vain for a ſufficient means of reconciliation with God; revelation teaches wherein this means conſiſts. Is it therefore to be wondered at, that this revelation, when it ſpeaks of the infinite and incomprehenſible God and his decrees which were unknown to reaſon, ſhould open unto us ſuch proſpects which our eyes cannot fully diſcern, or which is the ſame, that it ſhould teach myſteries, and require our faith to believe them? Whoever therefore declines adopting the chriſtian religion, ſhews himſelf unacquainted with its intention and its objects. He does not do that juſtice to religion, which he does to other ſciences. For though they contain more myſteries than religion ever did, he nevertheleſs does not object to them. You yourſelf, ſaid I, have met with thouſands of incomprehenſibilities in phyſic and chemiſtry, but I ſuppoſe you never thought them for this reaſon altogether dreams and deception. He owned it was true.

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I continued: If God was to reveal unto us myſteries unknown to reaſon, and which concerned himſelf and his will, he muſt do this by ſigns which we could underſtand, and theſe muſt be words. But in the language of men there were no words which could exactly convey that idea God was to communicate to us; for we cannot have words in any language to expreſs an idea we know nothing of. God was therefore to make uſe of ſuch words as conveyed that idea, which he wanted to reveal unto us, as nearly as poſſible; but nevertheleſs theſe words muſt always remain imperfect. He cannot apply them in their full ſignification, and with all the ideas annexed to them, to thoſe myſteries, which God has made known to us. They are to be taken only in their primitive and univerſal ſignification, and every thing imperfect is to be ſeparated from them.

I explained this to the Count by ſome examples, which he thought cleared up the matter very much. I ſaid: There are ſome ideas annexed to that relation which ſubſiſts between father and ſon. The father muſt have been before the ſon; he muſt have attained a certain age before he begot the ſon; he muſt have been connected with a perſon of the other ſex. Now if any body was

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to apply theſe ideas to the ſcripture expreſſion, Chriſt is the ſon of God, he would not only miſtake the matter, but even find many contradictions. Suppoſe an inhabitant of Iceland was to explain to an Indian the freezing up of the ſea, he would find no word in the language of an Indian to expreſs this phenomenon. Nevertheleſs he is to ſpeak to the Indian in his own language; he therefore is obliged to make uſe of improper words and images. He could, for inſtance, ſay, In my country the ſea, by the influence of the air, changes, at certain ſeaſons, into ſtone. Now the Indian is right if he thinks, that the ſea in Iceland is ſometimes as hard and ſolid as ſtone; but he is in great danger to repreſent the matter to himſelf quite falſly, if he was to apply the reſt of the properties of a ſtone and its uſe to the ideas of ice: If he ſhould think that houſes were built of ice, and ſerved like ſome ſtones for fuel to cook victuals with.

I now deſired the Count to keep theſe general obſervations concerning the myſteries of religion always before his eyes, ſince I was about propoſing them to him ſingly, to explain their ſcriptural ſenſe, to ſhew that they did not contradict reaſon, and that they were beneficial to mankind.

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The firſt myſtery connected with the doctrine of redemption is this: Chriſt is the ſon of God. The chief paſſages of Scripture in which this doctrine is told, are, Matth. iii. 17. Mark ix. 7. John iii. 16. This laſt paſſage, where Chriſt emphatically is called the only begotten ſon, ſhews that he is the ſon of God in a far more eminent ſenſe than men, and particularly the pious, who are called children of God.

Now if God calls Chriſt his ſon, what ſhall we think by this? Chriſt has his eſſence of God, like as a ſon of his father, yet not in the manner that this expreſſion conveys to us, which carries imperfections with it, but in an eminent manner which we cannot explain. Chriſt has the ſame eſſence which the father has, and is therefore perfectly equal with him, Hebr. i. 3. Chriſt the firſt born and only begotten ſon of God is entitled to every perfection of the father, he is united with him in perfect love, as an only ſon is with his father. You ſee from this that the father has repreſented to us that relation which ſubſiſts between him and Chriſt under the image of a father and a ſon, becauſe in the whole human nature no picture is to be found which expreſſes the moſt intimate union more exactly and more perfectly than this.—Do you find now in this repreſentation any thing contradicting?

" No,

" No, ſaid the Count, here is no contradiction; the whole myſtery lies in the inexplicable manner, by which Chriſt has his eſſence from God the father."

I added: Reaſon, therefore, cannot pretend to object any thing to this propoſition; Chriſt is the ſon of God; it rather is under an obligation to believe it without contradiction, out of reverence for the teſtimony and authority of him who has revealed it unto us.

I now made the remark, that all the myſteries of the chriſtian religion are beneficial to mankind, and that it was to our own real advantage to believe them. In this reſpect it is very beneficial to us that Chriſt is the ſon of God. Hence the ſon of God is our friend, our benefactor, our Saviour, our interceſſor. Is there any thing good which he has promiſed us, that he ſhould not have it in his power to give it? Every thing good, both in heaven and upon earth, is his as well as his father's. God will certainly hear his only begotten ſon when he intercedes for us. Are we to doubt that he that ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, ſhall not with him alſo freely give us all things?

Dear friend, this ſon of God is your Redeemer. You acknowledge him to be ſuch. Judge now what grace and mercy you may expect of him, if you firmly and confidently truſt in his redemption; if you ſpare no pains to think and act, during the remainder of your life, like him, God, I truſt, will not puniſh you in eternity, but be reconciled unto you through his own ſon. He will not deny you life everlaſting when Chriſt powerfully intercedes for you. Praiſed be God, who has enabled you to entertain ſuch a glorious hope, as no power, no ſplendour, no luſt of this world, and not your own reaſon itſelf could procure you. May he preſerve you in this hope until your death, for Chriſt's ſake!

The Count was very much moved, and promiſed to read what I had written on the ſubject of to-day, and which I left him for his further peruſal. He had likewiſe thoſe ſheets before him which I had given him upon former ſubjects to read them over again, to ſee how all theſe doctrines ſtood connected. He ſaid:

"He remembered that we had agreed once, that mere reaſon could not have found out the doctrine of redemption; but he found that many heathen nations had attempted to reconcile the Deity, by means of ſacrifices."

I anſwered:

I anſwered: Conſcience teaches man to reconcile God for ſins committed; but that ſacrifices were thought to ſerve for this purpoſe, was perhaps founded in the Jewiſh diſpenſation. Even mere reaſon might have invented ſacrifices, becauſe they were a proof that we rather would part with our property than entertain the thought of being under God's diſpleaſure. But that God would give his own ſon for a ſacrifice, was the manner of reconciliation which we agreed that reaſon itſelf could never have found out. After this the Count ſaid:

" One of my former objections comes into my mind again, which is: Why God could chuſe ſo deſpicable a people as the Jews were, for his peculiar one?"

When I had anſwered, that it might be, becauſe they were deſcendants of Abraham the friend of God, of whom they had received the true natural religion, and that they formerly were not ſo deſpicable as they now are thought to be, he added:

" It is true, we cannot prove from their being ſo deſpicable at preſent, that they have been always ſo. Beſides, the deſpicableneſs of a nation,

tion, is entirely a relative notion. An Engliſhman deſpiſes a Frenchman, and a Frenchman thinks his nation the moſt reſpectable one under the ſun."

*The nineteenth Conference. April the 1ſt.*

THE Count being told that ſince he believed the doctrine of redemption, he could not but believe the other myſteries, becauſe they were founded upon the ſame authority; he anſwered:

"I ſhall make no difficulties about that; if the one be true, the other muſt be ſo likewiſe. You have hitherto ſatisfied my reaſon, and I do not doubt but you will be able to do it further."

I continued: If Chriſt is the only begotten Son of God, and has of God his divine Eſſence, he muſt be the true God. The New Teſtament and Chriſt himſelf teaches this. It appears likewiſe from John v. 18. that the Jews underſtood him very well, for they ſought the more to kill him, not only becauſe he had broken the Sabbath, but ſaid, that God was his father, making himſelf equal with God. Chriſt con-

firmed what he had ſaid, by what follows, particularly ver. 21, 22, 23. Let us mind the following three reaſons: "The Son quickeneth whom he will; all judgment is committed unto the Son; all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

St. Paul treats likewiſe, Heb. i. of the divinity of Chriſt. He calls him the "Son of God, by whom the worlds are made; The brightneſs of God's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon." He applies an expreſſion of Pſal. xlv. 7. where God is addreſſed, to Chriſt, and calls him abſolutely God.

When I had read and explained to the Count, the two paſſages of John v. and Heb. i. he ſaid: "It is undeniable, that it was the intention of Jeſus and of Paul to tell the Jews that the Son is God."

Having more fully propoſed and proved this doctrine of Chriſt's Divinity, the Count, at the concluſion of the whole, ſaid:

"I cannot deſcribe to you, how much my reaſon is ſatisfied on account of theſe myſteries of religion. The more we think upon them, the

the more of divine wiſdom we diſcover in them. We muſt only avoid aſking every where: Why?—We muſt reſt ſatisfied with the authority of their author. Even in human ſciences this modeſty is requiſite: elſe we never ſhould come to any certainty. Moſt common things may employ our reſearches for all our life time, before we diſcover the firſt cauſe. Every *why?* would draw innumerable queſtions of the ſame nature after it, though our reaſon is not calculated to go *in infinitum.*"

The Count had now finiſhed the hiſtory of Chriſt's ſufferings, and had found the miracles that happened at the death of Chriſt very remarkable. He aſked:

"If any other hiſtorians, beſides the Evangeliſts, made any mention of them?"

He was told that Phlegon, Tertullian and Lucian, made mention of this famous eclipſe. Upon this the Count ſaid:

"He had ſpoken yeſterday with ſomebody, who would not allow theſe events to be real miracles, becauſe they could be fully accounted for by mere natural cauſes; but that he had told him, it was nevertheleſs remarkable,

that theſe events ſhould have happened at the time when Chriſt died, and even at the hour of his death. It ſeemed as if God, even by this very circumſtance, would raiſe people's attention to the death of Jeſus."

I told him, he might have added, that this eclipſe happened on the day before Eaſter, when, at the time of the full moon, this event could not take place in the natural way.

The father of the Count had deſired me in a letter, which I had lately received, to aſſure his ſon of the continuation of his love and interceſſion before God. I communicated to him the letter. He would fain have anſwered ſomething, but his grief of heart prevented it. When I left him half an hour after: "He begged me with tears in his eyes, to write to his parents, and to tell them that he certainly hoped to afford them the only comfort they wiſhed for, which was, to find them again before the throne of God, amongſt thoſe that have received mercy."

*The twentieth Conference. April the 3d.*

THE chief ſubject of this Conference was the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is taught in the chriſtian church. This doctrine being ſtated to him in the moſt ſimple manner, he ſaid:

" It appeared to him ſo as to excite his veneration. But as he was now a convinced chriſtian, as to the theoretical parts of Chriſt's religion, he wiſhed only to be the ſame, as to the practical parts of it."

I gave him joy of having now adopted the religion of Jeſus with all his heart. If you now loſe your life, you will find infinite compenſation in eternity.—He anſwered:

" Certainly I ſhall loſe nothing. The loſs would have been irreparable, if I had remained in my former ſituation. For in all probability I ſhould never have become a chriſtian. But I know now for certain, that if it was poſſible for me to live any longer in this world, I ſhould never quit religion again. I have been

oftentimes obſtinate in my opinions, and here I ſhould be ſo for good reaſons."

He being told in what manner he might ſhew and convince himſelf of being a practical chriſtian; he ſaid:

"I am ready to do any thing demanded in this reſpect. It gives me pleaſure to find myſelf willing for this. I look upon it as a good ſign. Formerly I ſhould not have been ſo. I would not have ſacrificed my vicious inclinations. I ſhall conſider in what manner I may give you and myſelf convincing proofs of the ſincerity of my preſent ſentiments. You frequently have dropt a hint, as if you thought I had ſtill too great an opinion of my adminiſtration of public affairs. I have taken my own time to go into the detail of it; I have ſearched the very ſprings, and I will not conceal before you the reſult of my enquiries. Believe me then, that I had no intention of doing miſchief. Voluptuouſneſs and vanity were the ſprings of all that I did. The great opinion I had of my abilities, and which was ſupported by others, made me reſolve, at my firſt coming into Denmark, to act a great part. I cannot ſay I ever imagined it would be ſuch as I have ſince acted. But

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you know, opportunities and circumſtances lead us ſometimes farther than we thought of in the beginning. One ſtep follows the other. Even from this you may conclude, that I abſolutely muſt find the whole chain of my enterprizes reproachful before God and my own conſcience. —But at the ſame time, I am conſcious, that I was no enemy to what the great world called virtue and honeſty. I do not tell you this in my own praiſe. I know this is not owing to my endeavours, but rather a conſequence of my natural way of thinking, and every man has a certain general love of virtue. That I miſſed my intention, was my own fault. I was looking out for what is good, but I did not find it, for I took not reaſon and religion, but paſſion for my guide."

He had now finiſhed Spalding's book on the value of the inward feelings of chriſtianity. He returned me thanks for having it given to him, and added:

" My ideas of that reformation in man, which is to be brought about by converſion, are greatly rectified by this book. I own with joy, I find chriſtianity more amiable the more I get acquainted with it. I never knew it before.

I believed it contradicted reaſon and the nature of man, whoſe religion it was deſigned to be. I thought it an artfully contrived and ambiguous doctrine, full of incomprehenſibilities. Whenever I formerly thought on religion in ſome ſerious moments, I had always an idea in my mind how it ought to be, which was, it ſhould be ſimple and accommodated to the abilities of men in every condition. I now find chriſtianity to be exactly ſo; it anſwers entirely that idea which I had formed of true religion. Had I but formerly known it was ſuch, I ſhould not have delayed turning chriſtian till this time of my impriſonment. But I had the misfortune to be prejudiced againſt religion, firſt through my own paſſions, but afterwards likewiſe through ſo many human inventions, foiſted into it, of which I could ſee plainly that they had no foundation, though they were ſtiled eſſential parts of chriſtianity. I was offended when God was always repreſented to me as an angry jealous Judge, who is much pleaſed when he has an opportunity of ſhewing his revenge, though I knew he was love itſelf; and am now convinced, that though he muſt puniſh, yet he takes no kind of delight in it, and is rather for pardoning. From my infancy, I have known but few chriſtians that had not ſcandalized

lized me by their enthuſiaſm, and wickedneſs, which they wanted to hide under the cloak of piety. I knew indeed that not all chriſtians were ſuch, or talked ſuch an affected language; but I was too volatile to enquire of better chriſtians after the true ſpirit of religion. Frequently I heard ſermons in my youth, but they made no impreſſion upon me. That without Chriſt there was no ſalvation, was the only truth which ſerved for a ſubject in all ſermons, and this was repeated over and over again in ſynonimous expreſſions. But it was never ſet in its true light, and never properly proved. I ſaw people cry at church, but after their tears were dried up, I found them in their actions not in the leaſt better, but rather allowing themſelves in every tranſgreſſion, upon the privilege of being faithful believers. Laſtly, I could not comprehend thoſe inward feelings which many chriſtians pretend to have. It appeared to me unnatural and miraculous. Nevertheleſs, it has made me uneaſy during our acquaintance, that I have found nothing of theſe inward feelings: and I believe you have obſerved my uneaſineſs. I found my real ſorrow for my ſins not adequate to thoſe expreſſions, which I had heard frequently in my youth, and which had terrified me ſo much. I endeavour-

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ed to heighten my grief to ſuch a degree: but I ſaw on the other ſide, that this forcing myſelf, by means of imagination, was not that grief I ſought for, or what might have pleaſed God. Spalding's book has ſatisfied me on this account. I am now ſure that the chief point is a confidence in God through Chriſt, and a true reformation of mind from what is bad to what is good. I myſelf can find out and be ſenſible, whether I have this confidence, and I myſelf am able to judge, whether ſuch a reformation has taken place within my mind.

## *The twenty-firſt Conference. April the 4th.*

I Repeated to the Count all we had done together hitherto, and ſurveyed with him afreſh the whole way that brought him to where he now was. After which he ſaid:

" That his preſent eaſe of mind was quite a different thing, from what he believed he had formerly. Now he found himſelf really compoſed, whereas he formerly only forced himſelf to appear

to

to be ſo. Perhaps he might have been able to die with an outſide appearance of firmneſs, but he believed he ſhould have found himſelf quite different, from what he hoped to find now in the hour of death."

The formal impeachment of the Count was to come on in a few days, and he was ſummoned to appear in perſon to hear it, and to produce what he might have to ſay in his defence.

This he told me, and aſked my advice, whether he ſhould let his affairs have their own way, or, whether he ſhould make the beſt defence he could?

I told him, chriſtianity never forbad him to uſe all lawful means to ſave himſelf.

" Among the crimes," ſaid he, " that will be laid to my charge, there is one incapable of any apology or mitigation. I ſee therefore that the probability of ſaving my life is by far inferior to that of ſuffering death. And beſides, I ſee nothing pleaſing before me, even if I ſhould ſave my life. Impriſonment for life would be unſupportable to me. However, I cannot deny that

that I ſhiver when I think on the hour of death under ſuch circumſtances! Conſider, if you pleaſe, what you would adviſe me to."

I do not ſee any hopes for you, ſaid I. Government has ordered you a council. He knows the laws better than I do, and therefore can tell you beſt what you have to hope, and what not. Your judges are conſcientious men, and well verſed in the law.

"I am convinced of that, ſaid he; they treated me like honeſt people."

Being adviſed not to flatter himſelf with vain hopes of ſaving his life, he gave me his hand, and promiſed that he would guard againſt it.

"I believe, ſaid he, God will not be diſpleaſed, that I feel the inſtinct of preſerving my life, which he himſelf has implanted. I hope, at the ſame time, that if I am to die, even then I ſhall be ſupported by a proſpect (at leaſt) of not being worſe off in eternity than I am now.—And do you think I ſhould do wrong, if I, at my approaching painful and ignominious death, call to my aſſiſtance all the natural and even acquired fortitude which I am poſſeſſed of?"

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I told him it would not be wrong if he did, but without any views of vanity. I hoped, however, religion would afford a much better and a much ſurer comfort, and prove a ſupport adequate to his ſufferings.

He read at preſent the Epiſtles of Paul to the Corinthians; and ſaid, he obſerved in St. Paul a great genius, much wiſdom, and true philoſophy. He was particularly pleaſed with his deciſion of the diſputed queſtion: Whether it was right to eat what was ſacrificed to the idols? He ſaid, it did honour to his prudence.

I now gave him Spalding's ſermons to read, which he took with great readineſs, being very partial to the author.

*The twenty-ſecond Conference. April the 6th.*

TO ſhew the Count how far his reformation and his intentions of doing good were ſincere, and how far his hopes of having received God's mercy were well grounded, I laid the following queſtions for ſelf-examination before him, and took his anſwers down in writing, that I might conſider them by myſelf when alone, and tell him afterwards my opinion how far I found them agreeing with the ſenſe of the Goſpel.

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The following are the principal queſtions and his anſwers.

Are you heartily ſorry that you have offended God by thoſe voluptuous thoughts and actions of which you find yourſelf guilty ?

" I look upon it as one of my greateſt crimes, and know that it has led me further and further from that truth which I might have found in the knowledge of religion, and I conſider it as the principal ſource of all my crimes and vices."

Do you think on theſe tranſgreſſions with deteſtation, which gave you, according to your former ſentiments, the greateſt pleaſure ?

" I think not only with indifference on all thoſe ſenſual pleaſures, but even I hate them, ſince I find how oppoſite and detrimental they are to real happineſs."

Do you believe, that if you had for the future any more opportunities to commit theſe ſins, you would avoid them out of obedience to God ?

" I am ſure I ſhould not be able to avoid them for any other reaſon. Therefore, ſince I begin to taſte the happineſs of virtue, and am ſure that I cannot acquire it but by a true fear of God

God and the deſire of acting according to his will, I am determined never to loſe ſight of this. I ſhall endeavour to rectify all my principles and actions by the efficacious aſſiſtance of theſe means, which I am become acquainted with through the knowledge of God and his revelation."

Are you truly ſorry becauſe you have offended God by leading on to immorality, and by making unhappy, through your inclination for ſenſual pleaſures, not only certain particular perſons, but other people likewiſe?

" I am extremely ſorry that I have rendered unhappy ſome perſons by my principles, inconſiderateneſs, and inclination for ſenſual pleaſures, not only by hindering their temporal welfare, but likewiſe by corrupting their moral character. At the ſame time I repent very much that I have ſet ſo bad an example, and thereby ſpoiled the good morals of others. I reproach myſelf on account of thoſe perſons whom I have actually ſeduced."

Do you deteſt thoſe tranſgreſſions to which your ambition has inſtigated you? the falſe principles upon which you founded your ambition, and the unlawful means you have uſed to ſatisfy it?

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" The firſt moral principles, according to which I acted, were againſt God's precepts, and were founded upon a ſyſtem of honour which I myſelf had formed, and where the principal view was always to gratify my own deſires and ſelf-intereſtedneſs. According to my preſent conviction, I cannot but think the whole chain of my actions in regard to honour reproachful, even then when I might juſtify or excuſe them before the world."

Are you ſorry that the happineſs of ſo many people, beſides that of your friends, who ſuffer with you now, has been made, a ſacrifice to your ambition, during the time of your exalted ſtation?

" I own I cannot excuſe before God my having thought too ſlightly of other people's happineſs. I abuſed the maxim that a ſingle member of ſociety might ſuffer for the benefit of the whole. God has recommended to us the love of our neighbour as the chief of virtues, which requires that every one ſhall promote the temporal welfare of ſingle perſons as much as lies in his power, at leaſt ſhall he not deſtroy it. All my political reaſons, which then determined me to act ſo, will not excuſe me or quiet my conſcience. And as for the misfortunes of my friends, I feel them

them ſo much the more, ſince my natural tenderneſs on this point diſpoſes me already for it."

Do you repent of that preſumption with which you placed yourſelf at the helm of adminiſtration, gave laws, and trifled with the happineſs of the nation?

" I find myſelf guilty of this in my conſcience. If even I could derive ſome excuſes from the circumſtances I was in, and which drew me in further than I thought in the beginning; I am nevertheleſs always to be blamed, for not making a ſtronger oppoſition, and not taking my motives for doing it from religion, where I might have found them."

Are you fully determined to profeſs chriſtianity until your end, and will you ever act according to its precepts?

" I now glory as much in chriſtianity and in acknowledging my former errors, as I then did in treating it with contempt. My reſolution, which is founded upon conviction, gives me the ſureſt hope that I, in all circumſtances, ſhall keep to it, and obſerve its precepts until my end."

Are you conſcious that you bear no hatred againſt thoſe whom you think your enemies, nor

againſt thoſe who have promoted your preſent misfortunes ?

" Since my temper is not revengeful, I am leſs inclined to hatred, and I truſt that thoſe perſons who are the cauſe of my misfortunes, have been acting from conviction, and with an intent to promote the intereſt of the king and the kingdom. And if even ſome people ſhould have acted from perſonal enmity, I forgive it very readily."

Are you conſcious that you ſpoke the truth before your judges, and in your converſation with me ? Do you likewiſe propoſe to ſpeak truth in what you ſhall ſay to your counſel, in your defence ?

" I do not remember to have ſpoken before my judges one untruth wilfully, unleſs, perhaps, for want of memory, ſome miſtake has happened. Still leſs do I know of any thing untrue which I might have ſpoken to you. I intend likewiſe not to ſay any thing in my defence, that ſhould not agree with truth."

Do you find a true deſire to be pardoned by God, through the merits of Chriſt, and do you truſt in God that he will not refuſe it ?

" I have

" I have no other hopes but what are founded in God's pardon, and I am convinced, that there are no other means for me to obtain it but the merits of Chriſt. I ſtrive to qualify myſelf for this through ſincere faith in my Redeemer, and by making my thoughts and ſentiments conformable to his will. I pray to God to ſtrengthen me in this reſpect, ſince I find within myſelf nothing but incapacity and weakneſs."

Do you look upon this pardon of God as the greateſt favour that can be conferred upon you; greater than even the ſaving of your temporal life?

" The ſaving of my life and all other temporal emoluments appear to me but very ſmall in compariſon of everlaſting happineſs, which my inward feeling has made me experience already."

Do you acknowledge yourſelf obliged, on account of this pardon, to love God and your Redeemer ſincerely, and will you ſtrive to increaſe this love?

" The more I grow convinced, the more impreſſion the mercy of God and of my Redeemer makes upon me, and increaſes my love and gratitude towards him."

Are you determined to ſhew this love towards God, by a ready obedience to his will, as long as you ſhall have time for it?

" Since I hope to be more and more convinced of the love of God towards me, and ſince I acknowledge that what he has decreed relating to me, is in all reſpects, particularly in regard to my ſoul, the moſt advantageous, I am ſure that I ſhall ſubmit to all his will, without murmuring and without reluctance."

Suppoſe your death ſhould within a few days, by the interpoſition of God's government, become unavoidable, would you ſuffer it humbly and confiding in God, terrifying as the circumſtances may be which ſhall attend it?

" As much as lies in my power, ſupported by that confidence which I place in God, I ſhall die with a chriſtianlike reſolution.

Are you reſolved to derive all your comfort only from religion, and not to call in for aſſiſtance a ſecret ambition, or an affected fortitude?

" I have reſigned every thing which may be called ambition, and have been obliged to do it; I am therefore ſure that in the laſt moments of my life I ſhall not be diſturbed by this paſſion.

I rather

I rather ſhall derive all my comforts from religion. Even my former ambition would not have led me to affectation. Without religion I ſhould have died as to my outward appearance juſt as I felt myſelf inwardly. Properly ſpeaking, I have been obſtinate only in defending my opinions, and in this reſpect I might, perhaps, too often have been guilty of affectation."

The Count aſſured me, on the cloſe of this examination, that he in all reſpects had told me exactly the ſentiments of his heart.—When I was going to leave him, he begged I would ſtay a little longer, ſince he had ſomething to communicate to me.

" I have been conſidering, ſaid he, about what I aſked your advice the other day. I ſee plainly my life cannot be ſaved; I am likewiſe eaſy about it, and I hope the wiſh to live longer will diſturb me no more, though I do not know how I ſhall be affected when I am very near death. If the awful moment was but once paſt, I then ſhall have loſt nothing. If, when I am going to ſuffer death, I am but capable of thinking, I am ſure to find compoſure and comfort in religion."

And if you ſhould not be able to remember, ſaid I, I ſhall put you in mind of it, though I do not know how much I myſelf ſhall be affected.

" I wiſh only you may not be too much affected, ſaid he, for this would add to my ſufferings."

I ſhall do as much as I can to moderate my tender feelings, and I believe to be able to do this, if I can have hopes that you die a chriſtian.

" I have been, ſaid he, very uneaſy about another thing. You know my chief crime. You know that by confeſſing it, other perſons to whom I lie under great obligations, are rendered likewiſe unhappy. I have been thinking whether it had not been my duty, on their account, not to have confeſſed, ſince gratitude and friendſhip ſeemed to demand it. I have been very uneaſy about it. But I took to prayers, as now my conſtant practice is, when I am under anxiety, and conſidered this whole matter on all ſides, directing my heart perpetually towards God. I found that my denying would hinder truth from appearing, and from making its way as it ought. I ſaw that it would be ſtill worſe to cover one crime with another, which would fill me with anxiety of conſcience, and make me incapable of receiving God's pardon. And certainly the requeſt would be unjuſt, that for the ſake of ſaving others I ſhould ſacrifice my everlaſting ſalvation. I found, laſtly,

that

that if I had denied every thing hitherto, I now ſhould have diſcovered it to you, and deſired you to acquaint my judges with it. By reaſoning in this manner, I have been ſo fortunate as to quiet my mind. I do not care now if people, who have no notion what it is to be anxious about everlaſting ſalvation, ſhould think me to be both a faithleſs man and a traitor. My confeſſion muſt be approved of by all true and rational chriſtians. However, the misfortune that has befallen my friends on account of my confeſſion, grieves me more than I am able to expreſs: I can pay them no other damages, but by praying to God to give them the comfort of religion and virtue. This is what I continually am praying for; and if theſe prayers are granted, I am ſure their loſs is ſufficiently repaid."

*The twenty-third Conference. April the 7th.*

THE Count being told that his anſwers to the queſtions propoſed to him yeſterday were ſuch as proved, that he hitherto had fulfilled thoſe conditions, under which God had promiſed to grant his pardon, he ſaid:

"I thank God that my peace of mind is likewiſe a proof of my being not rejected by God. I cannot but perſuade myſelf, that although now

in my fetters, and near a diſgraceful death, I am by far more happy than I was in my former grandeur."

When I had convinced him from Scripture paſſages, that my judgment was well grounded, and had comforted him by telling him, that the more he got acquainted with the advantages of his converſion, the more his faith would increaſe, and ſupply him with infinite comfort againſt death, he ſaid:

"Yes, I hope to experience that my death is but one difficult ſtep, and every thing I loſe by it ſhall infinitely be repaid to me."

Some exhortation being given, he ſaid: "That every night he examined himſelf whether he had done or thought any thing that might diſpleaſe God; if ſo, he prayed for forgiveneſs for Chriſt's ſake, and repeated all his good purpoſes, together with their motives. I believe likewiſe, ſaid he, that I can pray now with more chearfulneſs. Hitherto I found myſelf always unworthy, but I have ventured to pray, truſting to God's mercy."

Being adviſed to thank God for all the grace he had ſhewn him during the time of his converſion, he anſwered:

"I remember

" I remember with gratitude thoſe powerful impreſſions made upon me by peruſing many of the paſſages in thoſe books I have been reading; in particular when I was reading the Life of Chriſt. I own my inclination to look out for truth and to embrace it, has increaſed thereby from time to time."

Juſt when I was leaving the Count, he ſaid: " I am come now to a reſolution how I ſhall act in regard to my defence. I ſee neither my life can be ſaved, nor my actions be juſtified, nevertheleſs, I hope to be able to ſhew, that ſome are not quite ſo bad as they appear to be; for you know, to conſider our actions in a moral light before God, and in a political one before the world, are two different things. I know how bad mine appear in the former; but it does not follow that a thing ſhould be equally as bad when conſidered in a political light, as it may be in a moral one. I ſhall reſt ſatisfied to ſhew (for more I cannot do) that my political miſtakes were the conſequences of error, precipitation and paſſion, but not of a deſign to do miſchief. I think I owe this to truth, and even religion itſelf, as far as my converſion may either promote or hinder its intereſt. If, by keeping ſilence, I had allowed that I had bad intentions (though I do not recollect any myſelf),

myſelf), it perhaps then could eaſily have happened, that my converſion would have been looked upon as weakneſs and confuſion of mind, notwithſtanding it is the produce of a ſerious and rational diſquiſition. The world might elſe have ſaid, that a man could eaſily ſacrifice his former principles of religion, when it was a matter of indifference to him, whether he was thought to be a profeſſed rogue, or only a man who had tranſgreſſed from error in judgment."

*The twenty-fourth Conference. April the 9th.*

AFTER reciting the happy conſequences of his converſion, I aſked the Count if any one of thoſe days of his former grandeur and temporal proſperity had ever procured him that true tranquillity of mind which he now enjoyed in his priſon and in his fetters?

"You are in the right, anſwered the Count; and if nothing elſe had made me unhappy, the inſatiableneſs of my paſſions would have done it, for the moſt frequent enjoyments could not ſatisfy them."

He ſpoke likewiſe very ſenſibly about his approaching death. "He declared that death itſelf (the terrifying circumſtances which his might

be attended with excepted) preſented nothing dreadful to him, ſince he knew where it was to conduct him." He declared:

" It ſhould not make him uneaſy, if there was even any truth in the opinion of thoſe who aſſerted, that the ſoul, when ſeparated from the body, ſhould be in a ſtate of obſcure ideas and ſenſations, or in a kind of ſleep. For if my ſoul was not conſcious of itſelf, or was only in a place of ſecurity and eaſe, I ſhould loſe nothing by it. Should this ſleep laſt even a thouſand or ten thouſand years, it would not make me unhappy, for during all this time, I ſhould not know of any thing. However, it is by far more agreeable to me to learn from Scripture, that my ſoul, inſtantly after parting from the body, ſhall enter, conſcious of itſelf, into poſſeſſion of its happineſs."

Towards the cloſe of this converſation, he ſaid: " Though Scripture tells us but little about the ſtate the ſoul ſhall be in during its ſeparation from the body, yet even this little is matter of great comfort. If God had found it uſeful and neceſſary to give us further information, he would have done it. It is fully ſufficient to quiet my ſoul, when I know it will be in the hand of God.—From this you may judge how

how much it muſt vex me, if now and then this thought returns: ‘ perhaps there is no eternity !’ I examined myſelf to-day very ſtrictly, if perhaps I found a ſecret pleaſure therein, or if I entertained an obſcure notion of its being true: but I profeſs I found neither of them. There is not a ſhadow of probability left of my former ſyſtem, and the ſtrong proofs of the contrary are always before my eyes. Beſides, I am ſo much intereſted in my being at preſent better informed, that I would not part with my conviction upon any account, or act wilfully contrary to it. If by committing any crime, even ſuch as the world did not acknowledge to be ſuch, I could gain the greateſt temporal advantage, I am confident I ſhould not commit it. If I was promiſed for certain, my life ſhould be ſpared, and that I ſhould be reſtored to my former ſituation, under condition that I contradicted the confeſſion I have made of my crimes, and that I confirmed with an oath my new aſſertion, I am ſure I ſhould rather die than contradict truth, and take ſuch an oath. I am convinced I never ſhould think thus, where I was not perſuaded of eternity, and rather wiſhed or thought it to be a vain fancy. But I ſee now how difficult it is to extirpate ſuch falſe ideas, as we were formerly fond of.”

The

The Count had read Spalding's ſermons, and aſſured me he was much edified by them. Some of thoſe books which had contributed much to enlighten and reform him, he ſent to Count Brandt, for whom he ſhewed the tendereſt care. I gave him this day Doddridge's *treatiſe on the riſe and progreſs of religion in the ſoul.*

He deſired me to write to his parents, and to comfort them by the account I could now give them of him.

## *The twenty-fifth Conference. April the* 11*th.*

A Converſation which the Count had with a perſon who diſliked the reading of the Bible, on account of its ſtile, gave occaſion to ſome remarks on the ſtile of the Bible. Among the reſt he obſerved, that the ralleries of the freethinkers about Chriſt and his doctrine, were plain proofs, that they had no intention of acting honeſtly. "It is in general impertinent, ſaid he, to turn a virtuous man into ridicule. The old and unuſual expreſſions of the Bible cannot be the true reaſon, for which they ſhould think them deſerving ridicule. They do not laugh at other ancient writings, which are written in ſuch a ſtile. If they, for inſtance, were to read the books of Confucius, I am ſure they

would not hesitate about his stile, but praise his morals. In the same manner, they extoll the fables of Æsop, but the parables and narrations of Christ will not please them: notwithstanding they are derived from a greater knowledge of nature, and contain more excellent morality. Besides, they are proposed with a more noble and artless simplicity, than any writings of this kind, among ancient or modern authors. There must be therefore something else which prejudices them against Christ; and I do not know what else it could be, but their heart, which makes them averse to his precepts."

Some days since, the Count had obtained leave to have pen and ink; and he said, "he would make use of it, to draw up the account of his conversion, which he had promised to leave behind him."

It will be, said I, a very acceptable legacy to me. Write with reflection, and I hope it will not be useless. It shall remain an authentic monument of your religion and piety. I therefore leave it entirely to you, to arrange your thoughts and to write them down. I will have no other share in it, than to tell

you

you in general terms, how it is to be drawn up ſo as to anſwer its intention. This intention is partly to efface thoſe impreſſions your example has made upon the minds of others, partly to raiſe the attention of thoſe that are of the ſame way of thinking as you formerly were. It muſt therefore appear by this writing, that your ſentiments about religion and virtue are really altered. At the ſame time, you are to relate how this alteration was produced. I think this to be neceſſary, leſt any body ſhould doubt its truth. As to your ſtile and expreſſions, it muſt be ſuch, as will not be diſpleaſing to the people of the world, and that others may not entertain any doubt of your having become a chriſtian.

" I ſhall endeavour," ſaid he, " to keep theſe rules before my eyes. But if you find any miſtake, that I perhaps was not ſufficiently acquainted with ſome doctrines, or that ſome paſſages may be liable to cenſure, you are always at liberty to correct them."

No, replied I, not a ſingle word ſhall I attempt to alter. It muſt be entirely your own, for fear ſome people ſhould think it ſpurious.

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The Count remembered the late Reverend Mr. Alberti of Hamburgh, with whom he was perſonally acquainted, and wiſhed to read his ſermons, which I ſent him.

*The twenty-ſixth Conference. April the 13th.*

"ALberti's ſermons," ſaid the Count, "have much edified me. They have likewiſe contributed to make me have a greater regard for religion, and at the ſame time made me more compoſed and happy."

The to-day's converſation turned upon the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body. The Count having been made acquainted with the arguments in favour of it, ſaid:

"He believed the chief objections againſt the reſurrection of the body, were ſtarted after it had been poſitively aſſerted by Chriſt. From that time, thoſe who had a bad conſcience, became fearful. They endeavoured to ſecure themſelves by ſuch objections, againſt anxious expectations." He added, after ſome other reflexions, "That death was not indifferent to him,

him, but yet not terrible. Nevertheleſs, he could not deny, but that he had great reaſon to repent of thoſe actions by which he had haſtened it; yet, ſince this could not be altered, and he was ſure that his ſins would be forgiven, he had nothing that could attach him to this life, except the natural inſtinct of ſelf-preſervation; and he was ready to leave this world as ſoon as God pleaſed to call him. He did not care what might become of his body after his deceaſe, for it was ſafe every where under God's care. In the mean time, he would make the beſt uſe of his time he could, and endeavour to become every day better and more acceptable to God. For this purpoſe, ſaid he, I read, I pray, I reflect on my former and my preſent ſituation, and compare them both; I ſpeak to the officers about religion and virtue, but without intruding and without affectation."

## *The twenty-ſeventh Conference. April the* 14*th.*

FUture judgment, and everlaſting rewards and puniſhments, were the ſubject of this Conference. With regard to eternity and future puniſhments, the Count expreſſed himſelf in this manner:

 " If

" If even the punifhments of a future world, were only to laft during the life of a man, it would be very terrifying, and fufficient to keep us from fin. It would be dreadful enough if the punifhments confifted in nothing elfe but the natural confequences of fin, without any further difpenfations of God. I thought men might be punifhed in eternity by thofe paffions to which they were addicted in this world. They leave this world with all their internal appetites, which attend them in all their ftrength. There is nothing in the other world to fatisfy thefe defires. They confume themfelves in infatiable longings, and vain wifhes. God need only fay to them : You fhall remain as you are."

Being told that fince his falutary reformation, he joyfully might expect his fentence before God's tribunal, he replied, " That he really waited with joy for it, and trufted in God's mercy." He faid, " His objections, which he formerly thought unanfwerable, were now quite gone, or at leaft of fo little confequence, that he doubted about the truth of religion no more than about my being with him. He was now fo confcientious, that he examined every thing

thing he did and thought, whether it agreed with the will of God. And he found himſelf by this ſo well, ſo compoſed, ſo happy, that he was ſure, he ſhould conſtantly think and act in the ſame manner."

As the time of his death drew near, I thought proper to inſpire him with ideas of futurity; for which purpoſe I gave him Lavater's Proſpects into eternity.

## *The twenty-eighth Conference. April the 17th.*

TO day our converſation turned partly upon eternity. On occaſion of the explanation of ſeveral paſſages of Scripture, that have a relation to this ſubject, the Count admired the propriety of St. Paul's expreſſions, and the images he made uſe of.

" I find now," ſaid he, " that I from time to time get more acquainted with the ſtile of the Apoſtles. They write extremely well, now and then inimitably beautiful, and at the ſame time with ſimplicity and clearneſs." He quoted ſeveral paſſages, particularly from the eighth chapter to the Romans. He added, " I ſhould

like to ſee other publicans and tent-makers, write in the ſame manner as the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles did."

Being reminded that his uncommon and unexpected calmneſs and compoſure of mind, was a conſequence of his being certain of God's pardon, he ſaid:

" It is certainly a conſequence of my being pardoned for Chriſt's ſake, and of my being conſcious that my ſentiments are altered; and this accounts for thoſe ill founded ideas of the feelings in chriſtianity. The compoſed mind which chriſtianity procures, is ſuch a feeling. I have it now myſelf. They were only miſtaken in explaining the reaſons thereof. Why ſhould God produce theſe ſenſations by miracles, when they are the natural off-ſpring of a well founded conviction, and a true converſion?"

Towards the end of the converſation, he declared, " That he thought himſelf very happy in being ſo near eternity, though the manner in which he entered into it muſt be melancholy for him. In the mean time, he would do every thing in his power, to be in a ſituation in which he might hope to overcome the terrors of death, and

and to be certain of an happy immortality. He believed, his duty in this point conſiſted chiefly in having his former life continually before his eyes, that he might keep up a lively ſenſe of repentance, and in ſtriving to confirm himſelf in his preſent ſentiments, to mind them, and to accuſtom himſelf more and more to them. This, ſaid he, is now my whole occupation; it is ſo intereſting to me, and pleaſes me ſo well, that nothing is more agreeable to my taſte. A little while ago I uſed, as I told you, to read ſometimes *L' hiſtoire generale des voyages*. I then thought that I could employ my time better. But not being willing to appear in my own eyes in a hypocritical light, I would not forcibly ſuppreſs my inclination for this book. This inclination has now left me. I do not like to read, or to meditate on any thing elſe, but what concerns my chief buſineſs, which is a preparation for eternity. Thank God, I am advanced now ſo far, that my doubts do not make me any more uneaſy. What you told me in the beginning, I find to be true, for no objection preſents itſelf but what I am able to anſwer to my ſatisfaction."

" The chriſtian religion," ſaid he on another occaſion, " is ſo engaging, that it certainly muſt pleaſe every one who is properly acquainted with it. We ſhould ſee the beſt effects of it among the common people, in reforming the world, if it was properly repreſented, and made intelligible to the capacity of different ſorts of people. They ſhould be made ſenſible, that in this life they could never be happier than by following the precepts of chriſtianity. Every one then would be convinced, that, ſuppoſing even this religion to be a deluſion, it muſt be ſuch an one as contradicts entirely the nature of error and deluſion, becauſe it is the beſt and trueſt way to happineſs. Every one would think it worth his while to maintain this error and to propagate it."—He continued, " I wiſh you and other divines would write ſmall pamphlets, to acquaint the people with the advantages of chriſtianity, which might be of greater ſervice than preaching.—In this manner Voltaire has written, as you know, innumerable little pieces againſt religion, which contain always the ſame over again under different titles, and in a different dreſs. Rational friends of chriſtianity ſhould learn of him this method, by which he does much miſchief, and apply it to better purpoſes. Voltaire

boaſts

boaſts of having found out this method, as he ſays, to enlighten the world. I remember that when I converſed with D'Alembert at Paris, in my travels, that he ſpoke much in praiſe of this method, and admired Voltaire's wiſdom in this point. However, I do not believe him to be the inventor of it. Perhaps he has borrowed this way of ſpreading his principles from Chriſt himſelf, who taught truth, ſometimes in parables, ſometimes in queſtions and anſwers, ſometimes in ſermons."

" D'Alembert told me at the ſame time, that he had carefully examined chriſtianity, and had found nothing againſt reaſon in it. But the reaſon why he did not adopt it was, becauſe he had no inward feelings of it. Theſe feelings were the gift of God, and ſince he denied them him, he hoped to be excuſed for not having it, and conſequently for not being a chriſtian."

Laſtly, the Count complained of having been for ſome time troubled with diſagreeable dreams. He wanted to know how far there was any morality in them, and how far they could be charged to men. Being told that they proceeded from the free exertion of the ſoul during the time we are awake, he ſaid: " This anſwer ſatisfies me, for I never think of thoſe things, to which the

dreams are related. In general, I obſerve, that they derive their origin not from ſenſations and ideas, which were but lately in my mind, but from ſuch as were at a greater diſtance of time. Thus, during the firſt week of my impriſonment, I dreamt of nothing but of my parents, whom I have not ſeen a long while. It was as if I were in their houſe and their company. Many things that happened in their preſence during my infancy, came into my mind again."

*The twenty-ninth Conference. April the 20th.*

AMONG other things, which were the ſubject of this converſation, it was mentioned, that the nearer and more perfect contemplation of the works of God in futurity, would be a ſource of pure and everlaſting joy to the bleſſed. The Count then mentioned, " That the contemplation of the works of nature had oftentimes afforded him great ſatisfaction, and that it had been the only means of keeping him from atheiſm, into which he otherwiſe certainly ſhould have fallen."

An exhortation of advancing in godlineſs, ſince his end was ſo near, produced the following declaration

declaration from him: "Thank God," ſaid he, "I am ready to die, if it ſhould be even to-morrow. The freethinkers will ſay, I ſhould have found within myſelf ſtrength enough againſt my misfortunes, without applying to religion. They will ſay, I ſhewed myſelf now a coward, and was for this reaſon unworthy of my former proſperity. I wiſh to God I had not been unworthy of it for other reaſons. However, I ſhould like to aſk theſe gentlemen, in what manner I ſhould have found comfort within myſelf? I durſt not think on my crimes, on my preſent ſituation, on futurity, if I wanted tranquillity of mind. Nothing was left for me but to endeavour to ſtupify myſelf and to diſſipate my thoughts. But how long would this have laſted in my preſent ſolitude, and being removed from all opportunities of diſſipation? And ſuppoſe it had been poſſible, it would have been of little uſe, for the cauſe of fear and anxiety remained always, and would have rouſed me frequently from my artificial inſenſibility. I tried this method during the firſt weeks of my confinement, before I reflected on my condition. I laid for three or more hours together on my bed. My fancy compoſed romances, I travelled through the whole world, and my imaginations produced a thouſand pictures to amuſe myſelf with.

with. But at that time I fancied to ſee many ways of ſaving my life. I did not know whether and how far, my crimes might be diſcovered. A certain circumſtance, which deprived me of all my hopes, was then ſtill unknown to me. And even then, diſſipation would not anſwer the purpoſe. If I could dream in this manner perhaps for ſeveral hours, my terrors and my anxieties would return again. Perhaps ſome people will ſay, I ſhould have exerted my pride, and ſhewn, at leaſt by my outward conduct, that nothing could humble me. But alas! what a miſerable pride is it to have a bad conſcience, and to think of dying on a ſcaffold!—No, I find it is better to derive my comfort from the only true ſource, which is religion. And I wiſh that thoſe who blame me now for taking ſhelter under it, may find in their laſt hours the ſame tranquillity it affords me. There is but one thing in this world which makes me really and continually uneaſy, which is, that I have ſeduced others to irreligion and wickedneſs. I believe I ſhould not properly enjoy my future happineſs, if I knew any of thoſe I have deluded, would be eternally unhappy. It is therefore my moſt fervent wiſh, and my own happineſs depends on it, that God would ſhew mercy to all thoſe, I have by any means turned from him, and call them

them back to religion and virtue. I pray to God for this fervently."

Some queſtions being aſked concerning his prayers, he ſaid: "He prayed frequently. He held ſoliloquies in his own heart, and excited himſelf to confirm and rectify his ſentiments more and more. He addreſſed himſelf alſo to God, and begged his aſſiſtance for himſelf and his friends."

He deſired me to let him have ſome of Cramer's ſermons, and the *Meſſiah* of Klopſtock. He ſaid, "He had ſeveral times attempted to read this poem, but he never had any taſte for it. Perhaps the fault might have been his own, becauſe he was ignorant of thoſe doctrines of religion it was grounded upon, and never thought them of any importance. Now as he knew more of religion, and thought quite differently, he would try if the poem might produce good ſentiments in his ſoul."

*The thirtieth Conference. April the 21ſt.*

THE Count was now ſo much altered, that ſome of his former friends, whom I told of his preſent turn of thoughts and of his conduct, would ſcarce believe it. However, I had not the leaſt reaſon to doubt of the ſincerity of either. I do not know for what purpoſe he ſhould have attempted to deceive me. Beſides, diſſimulation was no part of his character. All thoſe who had an opportunity of ſeeing him, found him the ſame as I did, and I in particular had from the beginning guarded myſelf againſt being deceived. His preſent peace of mind ſeemed to me in particular a ſure proof of the effects of religion upon his heart. Among many obſervations he made to-day, the following ſeem to be of ſome importance.

" I conſider it now," ſaid he, " as a kind of folly, that the deiſts pretend to be offended at the humble appearance Chriſt and the firſt teachers of Chriſtianity made. I need not obſerve, that in relation to God, nothing is either little or great, but cannot help remarking that this humble appearance of Chriſt was very well adapted

adapted to the deſign of his miſſion. The common people took him now to be one of their equals, and placed confidence in him. For this reaſon Chriſt choſe his Apoſtles among the lower claſs of mankind, and the Apoſtles converſed moſtly with ſuch. And even theſe common people were as proper ſpectators of their miracles as an aſſembly of philoſophers, as they were all of that nature, that nothing more was required to judge of them, than the natural ſenſes and a common ſhare of underſtanding. A private ſoldier is perhaps more fit for ſuch an obſervation, than a general who has his head full of other things, or thinks it not worth his while to attend to it. The evidence which is given by men of common underſtanding in behalf of Chriſt's miracles, is therefore worthy of credit. The learned and the philoſophers can now conſider theſe facts, and examine whether they are real miracles, and then determine how far they are in favour of Chriſt and his doctrine."

Laſtly, the Count declared, " that he had a ſincere love towards God and his Redeemer, that he rejoiced in the bleſſings of eternity, though he was not anxious as to the time when he ſhould partake of them. The ſenſe of his repentance was not ſo lively as formerly, ſince he could apply the comforts of the Goſpel to quiet his conſci-

ence. I beg of you," added he, "conſider of my ſituation, whether you find me as I ſhould be. Write to Cramer, and deſire him to tell his opinion; I am ready to do what he or you ſhall preſcribe."

The Count knew that there was a correſpondence between Cramer and me concerning the progreſs of his converſion; I uſed to communicate to him thoſe paſſages in Cramer's letters that related to him. He readily made uſe of Cramer's reflexions and doubts. He was very deſirous of his letters, and enquired even the very laſt morning of his life, if any of his letters had been received which concerned him.

*The thirty-firſt Conference. April the 24th.*

THE following obſervation of the Count will ſerve to give us an idea of his character.

"Do not mind, ſaid he, if it ſhould be ſaid, you ought to have urged to me arguments which were not ſo philoſophical and more evangelical; I aſſure you that by no other means you would have found acceſs to my heart than by thoſe you have choſen. There are only three ways which you might have taken: declamation,

ſtirring up the imagination, and cool enquiry. If you had choſen that of declamation, I ſhould have immediately thought, If the man has a good cauſe, why does he not propoſe his reaſons without any art: if God has a revealed religion, it muſt ſtand the teſt of enquiry; I therefore ſhould have heard you without any emotion. If you had endeavoured to ſtir up my imagination, you muſt have done it by filling it with terrible deſcriptions of eternity. This method would have had ſtill leſs effect than declamation: I was very ſure that after death there was nothing either to hope or fear. Any impreſſion you might have made through fear would ſoon have worn off, and would have entirely vaniſhed by recollecting my former ſyſtem. The only way left you was that which you choſe, I mean, cool enquiry. I will tell you now what reſolution I had taken before you came, and for what reaſons I entered into converſation with you. About eight days before your firſt viſit to me, the commander of the caſtle aſked me if I choſe to converſe with a divine? Thinking, however, that every clergyman would be apt either to preach too much, or tire me with melancholy declamations, I declined the propoſal, and ſaid; I and all divines differ very much in opinion, and I have no inclination to diſpute. However, I knew

that

that I must expect a clergyman to attend me by order of government, I therefore resolved to receive him civilly, and to hear him with decency and composure. I intended to declare to him, at the end of the first visit, that if he was ordered to see me frequently he would be welcome, but I should beg of him not to entertain any hopes of converting me, for I was too well convinced of my own opinion, and should therefore never enter into any useless disputations.—When you came, my dear friend, I immediately perceived, that you had no intention to declaim to me in the stile of a preacher, or to fill me with fears and terrors, and inflame my imagination. You only desired me, since the matter was of so great consequence, to examine into my own principles, and the evidence for christianity. I found this reasonable, I had time to do it, and fancied I should, by this enquiry, discover that christianity had no foundation, and convince myself more strongly of the truth of my principles. We begun our conferences with great coolness; I read the books you gave me, though with diffidence, yet with attention. This did not continue long, and I could not help perceiving that I had been mistaken. It can scarcely be believed how much it has cost me to own my error, with regard to myself, as well as with regard to you. You may

remember

remember that I did not from the firſt deny that I had acted wrong, and had been unhappy in my former ſituation, and that my conſcience reproached me. But, conſidering my former obſtinacy, it was a great victory over myſelf, to confeſs that my former principles were falſe. To proceed ſo far was only to be done by reaſon. You are the beſt judge why you treated me in the manner you have done; but the ſucceſs entirely juſtifies you: my converſion is, through the grace of God, luckily brought about. In what manner this is effected muſt be indifferent to all but you and I. Senſible chriſtians will rejoice that my ſoul is ſaved, and that you have choſen this method, which, in regard to me, was the only good one."

Towards the end of our converſation I told him, that this week, in all probability, would be the laſt of his life, as I knew that next Saturday ſentence would be pronounced againſt him, and that between the ſentence and the execution of it, there would be very few days. He received this news with his former reſolution and ſerenity.

"I hope, ſaid he, that I ſhall certainly meet my death without ſtupifying fear and anxiety. I am only apprehenſive that you will be much

affected by this ſhocking ſcene. If it would have no bad effect upon the ſpectators, I ſhould deſire you not to accompany me to the ſcaffold."

No, ſaid I, dear Count, I am your only friend, and I dare not leave you. I will comfort you with the hope, which I entertain as a certain one, that you ſhall be happy in eternity: I will aſſiſt you under this ſevere fate; and the only recompence I expect, is to ſee you die as a chriſtian.

## *The thirty-ſecond Conference. April the 23d.*

THE Count, after aſking me why ſo many who know the precepts of chriſtianity, do nevertheleſs not live up to them, related a converſation he had with one of the officers, wherein he attempted to ſhew, that it was not impoſſible to practiſe the laws of chriſtianity. He afterwards deſired me to appoint a day when he could receive the ſacrament. I imagined that Thurſday would be the day of his execution, and as he wiſhed to comply with this ſolemn inſtitution ſome time before he ſuffered, we appointed the Monday following.

*The thirty-third Conference. April the 24th.*

THE Count had yeſterday finiſhed his account of his converſion, and he now delivered it to me.

He aſſured me he had drawn it up with a kind of anxiety, leſt he ſhould ſay any thing which was not ſtrictly conformable to his former and preſent principles. This was the reaſon why he had been ſo long about it. He was afraid he might not have expreſſed himſelf in ſome places with perſpicuity and propriety, ſince he had not for ſome years written much in the German language, and never upon ſuch a ſubject; beſides, he had endeavoured to expreſs himſelf with conciſeneſs, for fear of being too prolix. The employment itſelf had been very agreeable to him, as it had given him an opportunity of recollecting all the arguments by which he had been convinced, and had now found them ſo ſtrong, that he was confident he would not redeem his life for all his former proſperity, by any action which might contradict his preſent conviction. He deſired me now to read what he had drawn up, to judge whether it anſwered that intention for which it was written.

I then read the whole before him, and found ſome obſcure paſſages, expreſſions and ideas, which might be miſunderſtood by chriſtians and unbelievers, and made my remarks upon them. Some of theſe paſſages he altered with his own hand, ſome he rather choſe to leave as they were.

" I have drawn up, ſaid he, this account, to convince chriſtians, as well as thoſe which are not, and in whoſe hands this may fall, that I became a chriſtian after mature conſideration, and that I die ſuch. I am pretty well acquainted with the turn of thinking of the laſt, and will prevent them from ſaying that I turned chriſtian from fear, and weakneſs of underſtanding: I muſt endeavour to convince them, that I have examined the ſubject, and reaſoned upon it, to ſhew them, for inſtance, what is my opinion of the myſteries of religion, and why I do not think them contradictory to reaſon. If ſuch of my readers as are chriſtians ſhould find my ideas not altogether as they ſhould be, or my expreſſions ſometimes improper, I hope they will not be ſurprized, conſidering how new theſe truths are to me, and how little I am qualified to ſpeak or to write about them. You know, my dear friend, how I now believe, without any further reaſoning or explanation or inſight into the connexion of the whole

whole ſyſtem, every thing that Chriſt has taught, becauſe his word is ſufficient for me."

The Monday following, as I have mentioned already, was appointed for receiving the ſacrament. I told the Count, that ſince it was a ſolemn action, and at the ſame time a public confeſſion of his chriſtianity, I thought it proper that it ſhould be celebrated before ſome witneſſes, that were known to be true chriſtians. He anſwered:

"I wiſhed to receive it with Count Brandt, but ſince this will be matter of difficulty, I beg of you to intreat the commander of the caſtle to be preſent."

The Count did not appear to me to-day to be ſo ſerene and chearful as he uſed to be. I enquired what could be the reaſon of it, and he gave me the following anſwer:

"You know that to-morrow I expect my ſentence; this has induced me to reflect on former times. I thought if I had not acted in ſuch a manner as I have done, I ſhould not have come into this miſery; it has made me rather uneaſy: however you may be ſure that this uneaſineſs will ſoon paſs over; I have found already ſufficient reaſon to be above ſuch re-

ſlexions, ſince they are at preſent ill-timed and entirely unneceſſary.

*The thirty-fourth Conference. April the 25th.*

"VOluptuouſneſs, ſaid the Count, is the ſource of all my misfortunes; ambition has only contributed to haſten and complete them. I have told you already, that when I firſt came into Denmark I intended to cut as great a figure as my ſituation would permit. I then did not think of obtaining that power, to which I was raiſed; I could have ſatisfied myſelf with being eminent in my profeſſion as a phyſician. You will find this to be true from what I am going to tell you. I had reſolved to leave Altona, to reſign my ſtation there. I intended to go to Malaga, and to ſettle there as a phyſician, or to make a voyage to the Eaſt Indies. I had the following reaſons for my firſt reſolution. I was, at the time I took it, rather in ill health, and hoped a milder climate would agree better with me. The notion that the pleaſures of voluptuouſneſs would be greater and more pleaſing in a warmer climate, were a matter alſo of ſome conſequence. The many fine things in the Eaſt Indies, which I had read in voyages, and which had

had warmed my imagination, determined me more for the Eaſt Endies than for Malaga: beſides the great hopes I had of making a fortune, and ſatisfying thoſe deſires which made me think at firſt of Malaga. Now a proſpect opened itſelf to me, of making my fortune in Denmark. I ſeized on the favourable opportunity. And why? I am almoſt aſhamed to ſay it was owing to an acquaintance procured by a love intrigue which brought me hither. How greatly muſt I deteſt my former way of thinking, which made me follow a wild paſſion which always was blind! And how much am I now puniſhed for it!"

He was juſt ſpeaking of ſeveral things which concerned his heart, of his affections towards his parents and family, of his complying with his fate, when his council came into the room to acquaint him with his ſentence. "Good Count, ſaid he, I bring you bad news." He then pulled a copy of the ſentence out of his pocket.

"I expected nothing elſe, ſaid the Count; let me ſee."

He read. I fixed my eyes upon him with great attention, but I did not obſerve the leaſt

alteration in his countenance. After he had read it, he gave it to me. It was as follows:

" In conſequence of the Daniſh ſtatute law, book vi. chapter iv. art. 1. It is hereby declared juſt and right, that Count John Frederick Struenſee, for his due puniſhment, and that he may be an example to terrify others, has forfeited his honour, his life, and his eſtates. He ſhall be degraded from his dignity as Count, and all other digities which have been conferred upon him. His coat of arms, which he had as Count, ſhall be broken by the common hangman. Likewiſe ſhall John Frederick Struenſee's right hand, and afterwards his head, be cut off, his body ſhall be quartered and laid upon the wheel, and his head and his hand ſhall be ſtuck upon a pole."

During the time that I was reading this ſentence and trembled, he began to talk with compoſure with his council, and aſked if all the points of his accuſations had been regarded in framing his ſentence. The counſel anſwered in the affirmative. " And what will be the fate of Brandt?" His ſentence is exactly the ſame as yours. " And could his council do nothing in order to ſave him?" He has ſaid every thing that could be ſaid in his favour, but Count Brandt

Brandt has too much laid to his charge. The Count was more moved at this, than at his own fate. However he ſoon recollected himſelf, wrote ſomething to what he had drawn up for his council, and returned it to him.

When we were alone, I aſſured him of my ſincere compaſſion, and exhorted him to ſuffer his fate with the patience and ſubmiſſion of a chriſtian.

" I aſſure you," ſaid he, " I am very eaſy about that. Such puniſhments ſhould make an impreſſion upon others, and therefore they ought to be ſevere. I had prepared myſelf for this and more. I thought I might perhaps be broken upon the wheel, and was already conſidering whether I could ſuffer this kind of death with patience. If I have deſerved it, my infamy would not be removed, though thoſe diſgraceful circumſtances were not annexed to it. And if I had not deſerved it, which I cannot aſſert, ſenſible people would do me juſtice, and I ſhould gain in point of honour. And upon the whole, what is honour or infamy in this world to me? My judges had the law before them, and therefore they could not judge otherwiſe. I confeſs my crime is great;

I have

I have violated the Majeſty of the King. Many things I might not have done if I had been ſufficiently acquainted with the law—But why did I neglect it?"

To be ſure, ſaid I, you only are to blame. One of your crimes, of which there is not the leaſt doubt, is not only a crime againſt the King's Majeſty, but alſo againſt the whole nation, and it would be looked upon as ſuch in any other country. That unlawful power which you uſurped to yourſelf, is likewiſe a crime againſt the conſtitution of Denmark. And though perhaps you might not think you had been guilty of high treaſon on this account, yet the fact is proved, and the law is clear. He owned all this, and I was ſorry to have ſaid ſo many diſagreeable things to him. He added:

"I muſt only beg of you to be upon your guard, leſt you ſhould be too much affected when I go to die. The friendſhip I have for you, from which I cannot but ſympathize with you, would make me very uneaſy to ſee you ſuffer. Let us however continue our converſation calmly and compoſed to the laſt. Upon the ſcaffold ſpeak to me as little as poſſible, and as you ſhall think proper. I ſhall certainly do as much as lies in my power to direct my thoughts towards

towards God and my Redeemer. I ſhall not take my leave of you. Believe me, that without this ceremony, which likely might diſcompoſe my mind, I know and feel how much I owe you."

My readers will recollect how much this unhappy man was moved by a letter he received from his father, at a time when he ſtill maintained his irreligious principles. Now they have ſeen with what a compoſure of mind he heard his ſentence, after he was become a chriſtian.

He delivered to me the following letter for his parents, and left it to me, whether I would ſend it now or after his death. I choſe the latter, becauſe I knew his execution was very near, and I would ſave them the anxiety of expecting the melancholy news of it. The letter was as follows:

"Your letters have encreaſed my pain, but I have found in them that love which you always expreſſed for me. The memory of all that ſorrow which I have given you, by living contrary to your good advice, and the great affliction my impriſonment and death muſt cauſe you, grieves

grieves me the more, ſince, enlightened by truth, I ſee clearly the injury I have done. With the moſt ſincere repentance, I beg your pardon and forgiveneſs. I owe my preſent ſituation to my belief in the doctrine and redemption of Chriſt. Your prayers and your good example have contributed much towards it. Be aſſured, that your ſon has found that great good, which you believe to be the only true one. Look upon his misfortune as the means which made him obtain it. All impreſſions which my fate could make upon you, will be weakened by this, as it has effaced them with me. I recommend myſelf to your further interceſſion before God. I pray inceſſantly to Chriſt my Redeemer, that he may enable you to bear your preſent calamities. I owe the ſame to his aſſiſtance. My love to my brother and ſiſters. I am, with all filial reſpect, &c."

*The thirty-fifth Conference. April the 26th.*

I Heard from General lieutenant Holben, the commander of the caſtle, that Struenſee had been very uneaſy all laſt night: That he had kicked with his feet, gnaſhed with his teeth, and gnawed his fingers. The officer upon guard got up to him, but found him faſt aſleep. I enquired

enquired of my unfortunate friend, whether he had been troubled with disagreeable dreams. He said:

" That when he awaked in the morning, he remembered nothing but the bringing to his memory all the arguments, by which he was convinced of the truth of christianity. Of the uneasiness of his body he remembered nothing."

I had to acquaint him with the melancholy news that his sentence was confirmed in every particular circumstance, and that it was to be executed the day after to-morrow. I hoped he would hear it with a composed mind, and it happened so. As to those circumstances which were to throw infamy upon his death, he expressed himself thus:

" I am far above all this, and I wish my friend Brandt may be the same. Here in this world, since I am on the point of leaving it, neither honour nor infamy can affect me any more. It is equally the same to me after death, whether my body putrifies under ground or in the open air, whether it serves to feed the worms or the birds. God will know very well how to preserve those particles of my body, which, on the day of resurrection, are to constitute my future glorified

glorified body. It is not my all which is to be laid upon the wheel. Thank God! I know now very well that this duſt is not my whole being."

When I told him that next Tueſday would be his dying day, he anſwered:

" I thought it would be Friday. However, I do not wiſh even for this ſhort delay. It would be the ſame as if I was to undergo a painful operation for my health, and ſhould deſire to have it delayed when it was juſt going to be performed. I ſhould be obliged to ſubmit to it at laſt, and I ſhould only recover my health later." —He then went through all the circumſtances of his death, and compared them with thoſe of the death of Chriſt, and found that Jeſus had ſuffered infinitely more for his ſake, than he was to ſuffer on account of his crimes. He praiſed the power of prayer in comforting him, when he was now and then anxious about the ſtep he was to take.

I am unable to deſcribe the eaſe and tranquillity with which he ſpoke. I expected much from the power of religion over his heart, but it exceeded my moſt ſanguine expectations.

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He assured me that religion, and his firm hopes of being pardoned by God, had produced this ease of mind. He owned that his natural coolness of temper, his using himself for many years to keep his imagination within bounds, and his entertaining himself rather with reflections of sound reason than images of fancy, had in some respects supported him; but he was convinced that all this, without religion, would never have composed his mind. God had adapted it for all kind of tempers and for all characters. It was fit for all men, and it found in him a good soil to produce all its good effects of tranquillity and fortitude in adversity. He added: "Although the way which leads me out of this world is very disagreeable, yet I have reason to praise God that he has made choice of it; that he has shewn me the approaching death aforehand, and at the same time has extricated me out of the pleasures and dissipations of this life. In no other manner should I have become acquainted with truth, or should have reformed my sentiments; though I am sure I should have adopted christianity in all situations of life, if I had known it so well as I do now: And yet, I never should have taken proper time to examine into it. When I formerly thought on death, it had but little effect upon me. I rather

suppressed

ſuppreſſed it, ſometimes by thinking it was a fate which could not be avoided, and therefore was not to be called into our thoughts before there was occaſion for it: ſometimes, by perſuading myſelf it was folly to imbitter the preſent enjoyments, by thinking on what was to come. Even when I was in danger of my life, I avoided looking into futurity. I have been ſometimes ſo dangerouſly ill, that my life has been deſpaired of; I have been riding furiouſly, and no longer ago than laſt ſummer broke my arm, by being thrown from my horſe, but it never entered my thoughts to look one ſtep further than this preſent life.

Being reminded of ſelf-examination, he ſaid, "he did it every day. It was an occupation he liked."—Among other things, he ſaid: "I know my adminiſtration of ſtate affairs is very blameable before God and men, and my own conſcience, on account of the bad principles by which I was actuated, namely, levity, haſte, pride and ſelfiſhneſs. How far they are wrong, either upon the whole or ſingly conſidered in a political light, I am unable indeed to determine, becauſe I ſhall not live to ſee the conſequences. However, I muſt expect to have been ſubject to error in my political principles, as well as I have

have been in my religious ones. I leave this point to be decided by thoſe that ſurvive me, and I ſubmit to their judgment. This only I can and muſt ſay, (for I ſhould ſpeak untruth if I was to ſpeak otherwiſe) that I am not conſcious of any bad intentions."

After this a converſation enſued about the Lord's Supper. When it was finiſhed, I told him that a poor peaſant, who met me to-day in the ſtreet, called out to me: 'Father, do what you can to convince Struenſee that he has ſinned againſt our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and if he acknowledges this he will be ſaved.' The Count was much pleaſed, on account of the chriſtian love which this man had ſhewn; and obſerved that chriſtianity could inſtill ſentiments of humanity into the minds of illiterate people whoſe ſouls were not refined by education.

"Reading," ſaid he, "will not ſufficiently entertain me at preſent, therefore I have been writing to-day." Among the reſt he had written the following letter to Lady Perkentin at Pinneberg, which he deſired me to take care that it might be ſafely delivered. The following is the letter.

My Lady,

" I make uſe of the firſt moments, which permit me to write to you. Buſineſs, duties, and my late connexions, have perhaps leſſened in me the remembrance of my former friends, but they have not been able to obliterate their memory entirely. My preſent leiſure has revived it the more lively. If my ſilence has raiſed ſuſpicion againſt my former ſentiments, I beg pardon of all thoſe that are intitled to my gratitude, and of you, my Lady, in particular. This, however, is not the only advantage, which the change of my fate has produced. I owe my knowledge of truth to it, it has procured me a happineſs of which I had no more expectation, ſince I had already loſt ſight of it. I intreat you to conſider my misfortunes in no other light but that of religion. I gain more by it than ever I can loſe, and I feel and aſſure you of this with conviction, eaſe and joy of heart. I beg of you to repeat what I now write, in the houſe of Count Ahlefeld and at Ranzau. I am under great obligations to theſe two families, and it has grieved me the more, to have drawn with me into misfortunes, perſons which are related to them. Permit me, my Lady, to

add

add to this, my reſpects to Lady Thun, and the family of Mr. de Waitz. I remain, with moſt reſpectful ſentiments, &c."

*April* the 26th, 1772.

## *The thirty-fifth Conference. April the 26th.*

I Came to-day to the Count with general lieutenant Hoben, who, at my requeſt, was preſent at his receiving the ſacrament. I adminiſtered it to him; and this man, who received his ſentence of death without any appearing alteration of mind, was during the whole time of this ſacred tranſaction, as if he was melting into tears. I never obſerved a tear in his eyes as often as we were talking about his misfortunes and death; but on account of his ſins, his moral miſery into which he had thrown himſelf and others; on account of the love of God towards him and all mankind, he has wept more than I myſelf ſhould believe, if I had not ſeen it.

When the whole tranſaction of receiving the ſacrament was over, he begged leave of the commander of the caſtle, to make preſents of the trifles that he had left, his bed, his linen,

and the little money which he had ſaved out of his allowance, which was a rixdollar or a crown every day. He ſaid, " I have now no more property."

He then took his farewel of the commander, in a very affecting manner; thanked him for all kindneſs he had ſhewn him, and declared, that he had not denied him any favour that was in his power to grant. The old venerable man left him with theſe words: " I am ſure we ſhall find one another again before the throne of God."

When we were alone again, he ſaid: " Nothing is now of great importance to me, but to be certain, that I ſhall appear before God with all poſſible ſincerity and uprightneſs of ſentiment. I therefore have examined myſelf once more carefully, and I find a kind of pleaſure in it, becauſe it is my duty. I am conſcious that I perform every thing chearfully and without the leaſt reluctance, ſince, enlightened by chriſtianity, I have learnt what is my duty. Thus have I thought myſelf obliged, to draw up the account of my converſion, which is in your poſſeſſion, to efface as much as poſſible that impreſſion, which I have made upon others by my converſation

converſation and example. I can aſſure you, I felt more ſatisfaction in writing it, than ever I did in drawing up other things, that concerned partly my defence. I have more minutely examined my adminiſtration of ſtate affairs; and I can, according to my conſcience, judge of it no otherwiſe than I told you yeſterday. I go into eternity, conſcious that it was not my intention to make the King or the nation unhappy. It is true, I have, within a ſhort time, amaſſed conſiderable riches, and taken advantage of the King's favour towards me, in a manner I cannot anſwer for; but I never have falſified the accounts, though much in this reſpect ſeems to be againſt me, and I can blame nobody who thinks me in this reſpect likewiſe culpable."

It is difficult to diſmiſs every ſuſpicion on this head againſt Struenſee. And if he was guilty, of how little value would be his converſion! It has made me uneaſy frequently, and even now ſtill after his death. All manner of appearances, his own confeſſion, that he could not free himſelf from all ſuſpicion, and many other evidences are againſt him. However, on the other ſide, it makes me eaſy that he confeſſed greater and more puniſhable crimes, without

conſtraint, but denied this with a firmneſs, calmneſs of mind and confidence, which, inexplicable as the matter remains, makes it difficult to believe him guilty.

" I have traced out, continued he, the origin from which my preſent calmneſs and tranquillity proceeds. I am ſure they are quite different from thoſe which afforded me comfort in my former misfortunes. It is quite impoſſible in my preſent ſituation, to draw my thoughts from my imminent danger by diſſipation. Approaching death is not ſo eaſily expelled from one's thoughts. I feel no more of any pride. I am too ſenſible how little I am in this my priſon. I deteſt the principle that teaches, there are no expectations after death. Nothing but the aſſurance of the divine mercy through faith in Chriſt, and the conſciouſneſs that I ſpare no pains to make my ſentiments acceptable before God, comforts and compoſes me."

" However," added he, " this my eaſe makes me not idle; for I continue, and ſhall do ſo until to the very laſt, to ſearch earneſtly after all thoſe things in me which ſtill may diſpleaſe God, that I may remove them as much as poſſible."

Among the many proofs he gave of this, I ſhall only mention the following, becauſe it ſhews how ſcrupulouſly conſcientious he was.

" I think, ſaid he, that it is the duty of a chriſtian to pray before he ſits down to a meal, though my ſentiments in this reſpect do not favour ſuperſtition. It is but juſt, to direct our thoughts on ſuch occaſions, full of gratitude, towards him who ſupplies our wants in this way. I therefore have made it for ſome time a rule to pray before and after dinner and ſupper. However, my old cuſtom had frequently ſo much power over me, that I oftentimes ſat down to eat before I had ſaid grace. Now it may be equally the ſame whether I direct my thoughts towards God, before or after having taken two or three ſpoonfuls of ſoup; but it has vexed me to find that my old careleſs way of thinking has made me forget, what I thought to be my duty."

How do my readers like the conſcientiouſneſs of a man, who formerly indulged himſelf in every thing his paſſions drove him to?

*The thirty-ſeventh Conference. April the 27th.*

I Found him to-day in the moſt unfeigned tranquillity of mind, to which indeed I had been witneſs for ſeveral weeks paſt, but which appeared more and more ſtriking to me the nearer the time of his death advanced. I praiſed God in my heart, who ſhewed ſo much mercy to this unhappy man! How often did I wiſh that I might not be the only man upon earth, who heard him ſpeak ſo compoſedly about his death.

He had written another letter to the Chamberlain de Brandt, the brother of the unhappy Count, which he deſired me to get delivered. Several other papers, which he had written in his priſon, were incloſed in a cover, and ſealed up by me in the preſence of the commander of the caſtle, who once more did us the favour to come into the priſon. The other papers, which conſiſted of thoſe writings of mine, which I had given him from time to time, and the two letters of his parents to him, he delivered to me likewiſe.—And now he had ſet his houſe in order.—

The

The following is the letter to the Chamberlain de Brandt.

" Sir,

" Permit me to bewail with you and the Lady your mother, the fate of our dear Enevold. Do not think me unworthy of ſharing this your grief with you, though accidentally I have been the cauſe of it. You know how much I love him. He was the man of all the world who poſſeſſed the largeſt ſhare of my friendſhip. His misfortunes give me the greateſt anxiety, and my own have been on this account moſt painful to me. He has ſhared my proſperity with me, and I truſt that we now both together ſhall enjoy that happineſs which our Redeemer has promiſed us. I do not know any thing wherewith I could comfort you. You are acquainted with religion. There I found refuge to comfort me on account of my misfortune. I pray to God, that he in this very moment will let you feel all its power. I ſhall not ceaſe to entertain a moſt lively ſenſe of gratitude for all thoſe perſons, which are dear to me at Ranzau. I am wholly your's."

*April* the 27th, 1772.

" *P. S.* I have been in hopes, and ſtill flatter myſelf, that the ſentence of my friend will be mitigated."

The ſubject of our to-day's converſation was chiefly upon the redemption of Chriſt. I repeated moſtly what I had ſpoken on the ſubject already when we purpoſely treated on it. He ſaid many ſtriking and edifying things on this occaſion; but the emotion my heart was in, prevented my perfect remembrance of each particular. The following is part of it

"I look upon the reconciliation of men to God, through the death of Chriſt, as the only means of receiving forgiveneſs of ſins. Every thing elſe, which is believed to ſerve the ſame purpoſe, is apparently inſufficient. But this is conformable to all our notions of God; it produces ideas ſuitable to the attributes of God; it is founded on the beſt reaſons, and procures us comfort and chearfulneſs at the time when death approaches. Whoever will not adopt and make uſe of this redemption, declares that he will neither be virtuous, nor fear God; for he rejects the ſtrongeſt motives which God could ever propoſe to mankind, to fear him and to love virtue; he ſlights the aſſiſtance of God, without which nobody can be honeſt or good."

He added: "I leave the world, fully convinced of the truth of the chriſtian religion."

I then

I then turned our converſation upon the love of a pious chriſtian towards God, I ſhewed him how much we were obliged to this love on account of the redemption, and aſked him how he found his love towards God and his Redeemer. He ſaid:

" I look upon God and Chriſt as my beſt friends; and in this view I conſider thoſe obligations of love which I owe to God and my Redeemer. I firſt muſt know and feel for what I am indebted to my friend and benefactor. He is deſirous of making me happy, he finds the means of doing it, he ſacrifices on my account what he loves and what is dear to him. As long as I do not acknowledge this, or do not know how to value the ſame, ſo long am I unworthy of his friendſhip, and do not love him. I am further obliged to ſhew my readineſs to act according to his intentions: elſe I am ungrateful, and want him to be my friend only for ſelf-intereſt, and to do nothing myſelf that was worthy of his friendſhip. You ſee here the principles according to which I love God and my Redeemer. I know what God has done for me, and what it has coſt Chriſt to procure my ſalvation. I know how great the bleſſing is which I ſhall enjoy through him. But I am likewiſe

conſcious

conſcious that I do, whatever I can, to act according to the will of God, to rectify my ſentiments, and to prepare myſelf for death in a manner which may be acceptable before God. I ſubmit without the leaſt reluctance to his will in regard to myſelf, becauſe I know he loves me. I look upon my death, and all thoſe awful and ignominious circumſtances that are to attend it, as things which God found neceſſary for my own good. In the beginning of my confinement, I thought quite different from what I do now, even when I recollected that my affairs might perhaps turn out in the manner that they do now. I wiſhed to fall ſick and to die. I even had the thought of abſtaining from eating and to ſtarve myſelf to death: yet I never ſhould have laid hands on myſelf, though I ſhould have had an opportunity for it. I now praiſe God heartily that neither of the two has taken place."

I told him, that theſe ſentiments gave me great ſatisfaction in regard to his ſalvation, and that I ſaw now how great reaſon he had to be ſo calm and ſo compoſed as I found him.

" Yes, thanks be to God, ſaid he, I am as ſatisfied as a man can be who ſees his greateſt happineſs before him. I therefore humbly adore the

the mercy of God, and the power of religion. If it happens that my tranquillity is interrupted for ſome moments, it is cauſed by the wiſh to be convinced that I have fulfilled all thoſe conditions under which God will grant me mercy, and that I am ſuch as God wants me to be. I therefore have taken the book of Spalding into my hands again, to ſatisfy myſelf on this point." I anſwered,

That I did not know of any other conditions of our ſalvation, and the Bible taught us no other but theſe two: an unlimited confidence in God through Chriſt, and a zeal to think and to act always according to the will of God. And ſince he was conſcious that he believed in Chriſt, and that he loved God, he had no reaſon to doubt of his being pardoned before God. He then ſaid:

" I have examined myſelf in all reſpects I could think of, and I find nothing that can make me uneaſy. If I found any thing of this kind, I ſhould have told you of it, and have aſked your advice. But how eaſily may I have overlooked many things which are known to God; and if ſo, what will he do?"

He

He will forgive you, ſaid I, becauſe you have done what you could do in thoſe circumſtances you were in. We cannot raiſe ourſelves to perfection.

We afterwards conſulted and ſettled how we ſhould act to-morrow, it being the day when he was to die. I promiſed to be with him ſome hours before he went to the ſcaffold; for, according to the King's order, I durſt not go along with him to the place of execution; I was to go before him, and to receive him there.

He deſired me to carry on our converſation to-morrow, as compoſedly and as coolly as hitherto. He wiſhed that we might finiſh what we had to do on the ſcaffold as quick as poſſible, and that I might keep up my ſpirits, that he might not ſee me ſuffer. As for himſelf, he ſhould ſay nothing there but what he thought abſolutely neceſſary; for he would direct his thoughts entirely towards God, and that eternity he was to enter into.

I told him, that according to the ritual I was to aſk him a great many queſtions, but that I thought I had a right of ſhortening them. I did this in his preſence, wrote the queſtions down, which

which I was to aſk him, and read them to him afterwards.

" I do not chuſe, ſaid he, to ſee my brother and to take leave of him, on account of the tenderneſs of our ſituation. I beg therefore of you to do it in my name. I intreat his pardon, for drawing him with me into misfortunes, but I hope and am certain that his affairs will turn out well. I aſſure him of my leaving this world with true brotherly affection for him. Tell him likewiſe of the ſentiments in which I die, and how you find me."

This commiſſion, which was the moſt tender and moſt moving I ever had, I diſcharged, by the leave of the commander, this very evening, and carried back the anſwer of the much affected brother.

*The thirty-eighth Conference. April the 28th.*

ACcording to the account of the officer who had the watch that night, the Count, who now was certainly no more an unhappy man, had been reading a good while the preceeding evening, and

and went to bed pretty early. He had ſlept for five or ſix hours together very ſoundly. When he wakened in the morning, he had ſpent a good while in deep meditation. He then got up, dreſſed himſelf, and converſed with the officer very compoſedly.

I found him lying on a couch, dreſſed as he intended to go to the place of execution. He was reading Shlegel's ſermons on the ſufferings of Chriſt, and received me with his uſual ſerene and compoſed countenance. He ſaid:

" I was thinking laſt night whether it might not ſtrengthen me in my way to death, if I was to fill my fancy with agreeable images of eternity and future bliſs. I might have uſed for this purpoſe *Lavater's Proſpects into Eternity:* but I will not venture to do this. I rather think it better to take this great ſtep in cool conſideration. Fancy, if once put in agitation, can ſoon take a falſe turn. It could diſmiſs (perhaps) at once, my agreeable and pleaſing proſpects of eternity, and eagerly catch at the formidable circumſtances of death, by which means I fear that I ſhould be unmanned. Even in going to the place of execution, I will not indulge it, but rather employ my reaſon

reaſon in meditating on the walk of Chriſt to his death, and apply it to myſelf."

He then deſired me, if I thought it neceſſary, to aſſure his judges in his name once more, that what he had confeſſed, was in all reſpects the truth, and that he had not wilfully concealed any thing, which he himſelf or others could be charged with. He continued:

" When I awoke this morning and found that it was daylight, my whole body was ſeized with a vehement trembling. I took directly to prayer, and conſidered the comforts of religion. I prayed for the King, that God's wiſdom and mercy might guide him, and that he perſonally might be perfectly happy. I ſoon recovered my ſpirits again. I am now calm and compoſed, and I am ſure I ſhall remain ſo. Why ſhould I make myſelf uneaſy, when I am fully convinced of my ſalvation? God has forgiven me my ſins, and even thoſe which I do not remember; he has pardoned me for thoſe things which he ſtill diſlikes in me, and which I by ſelf-examination could not diſcover, and therefore could not reform. God can not forgive vice in general, without doing the ſame in every particular ſpecies of vice. The remembrance of the

ſufferings of Chriſt, who has ſatisfied God for all men, aſſure me of this. And ſince I am ſo certain of my ſalvation, I do not dread death. Fear of death would be inconſiſtent under circumſtances ſo full of a happy eternity. Beſides, I cannot complain that my fate is too hard. I know that I deſerve this and ſtill more. But, "who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?—Who is he that condemneth?"

I took the opportunity he gave me, to explain to him the whole eighth chapter of St. Paul to the Romans: There were ſo many beautiful paſſages which were excellently well adapted to his former and his preſent ſituation. The moſt viſible calmneſs was to be obſerved in his whole countenance; and he frequently prevented my going on, by falling into the ſame obſervations I was juſt going to make in order to ſtrengthen his faith.

He now aſked me: "How far am I permitted to keep up my fortitude by natural means? For inſtance: by endeavouring to retain preſence of mind, and not to permit myſelf to be carried away by imagination and fancy." I anſwered,

If

If God has given you a certain ſtrength of ſoul, it is his will that you ſhall make uſe of it, in thoſe moments when you ſtand moſt in need of it. But no inward pride or any ill-founded complacency is to interfere. You are to do nothing merely for the ſake of being applauded by the ſpectators on account of your reſolution and compoſure. You are to be above ſuch things. God loves ſincerity, which conſiſts in ſhewing ourſelves outwardly as we are inwardly. Shew yourſelf therefore exactly in the manner as you feel yourſelf within. If you even ſhould be ſo much affected as to ſhed tears, do not hide them, and do not be aſhamed of them; for they are no diſhonour to you. You cannot conceal from yourſelf, even unto the very laſt moment of your life, why you are to die. You would do wrong, and offend true chriſtians, if you were to die with a chearfulneſs, which can only fall to the ſhare of thoſe that ſuffer for the ſake of truth and virtue. I wiſh to ſee you on the ſcaffold with viſible ſigns of repentance and ſorrow, but at the ſame time with a peace of mind which ariſes from a confidence of being pardoned before God. I ſhould even diſlike to ſee you conceal the natural fear of death. He ſaid:

" I am certainly not inclined to make any ſhew before men. Nothing can be now more inte-

reſting to me than to pleaſe God, and to conquer the terrors of death. If I ſhould force myſelf to appear outwardly different from what I am within, it would happen to me what happens to a man, who is to ſpeak to an eminent perſon, and has well conſidered every thing he is going to ſay, but now begins to ſtammer, and, by endeavouring to prevent this, becomes quite ſpeechleſs. I ſhall, as much as lies in my power, direct my thoughts towards God, and not diſturb myſelf by ſtudying to ſatisfy the expectation of the ſpectators. Therefore I ſhall ſay nothing on the ſcaffold, but what you yourſelf ſhall give me occaſion for."

I aſſure you, ſaid I, I ſhall give you very few opportunities for it; the ſcaffold is neither for you nor for me the place for ſpeaking much. When you are there, it will be your buſineſs to ſtrengthen your thoughts as much as poſſible, forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before.

"Now, ſaid he, ſince I am ſo near death, I find how neceſſary and how beneficial to men the poſitive aſſertion of Chriſt is of the exiſtence of eternity. If I was not ſure of this, mere reaſon would give me but little ſatisfaction upon this queſtion: Whether a few hours hence any thing would

would be left of me that retained its life?—I can likewiſe tell you, from my preſent experience, that a bad conſcience is worſe than death. I now find comfort againſt death, but as long as the former laſted, I had no peace within me. I believe that I ſhould have become quite hardened, if this wound had not been healed."

" I believe you have obſerved, that I would not let thoſe ſenſations which were produced by my certainty of being pardoned before God, grow very lively. They might have hindered me in my ſtudying to reform my heart, and in examining myſelf. But now I enjoy the comfort of being conſcious to have done what I could to pleaſe God."

In the abovementioned letter to the chamberlain de Brandt, he had ſaid that he had become innocently the cauſe of his brother's misfortunes. He deſired me to explain theſe words to him: " That he, with a good intention, had brought his friend Brandt to Copenhagen, and had kept him from withdrawing himſelf when he had a good opportunity for it."

Now the door of the priſon opened, for which the Count himſelf never, but I very often, had looked with a fearful expectation.—An officer

came in, and desired me, if I pleased, to step into the coach, and to go before the Count to the place of execution. I was much moved and affected. The Count, as if it did not concern him in the least, comforted me by saying:

"Make yourself easy, my dear friend, by considering the happiness I am going to enter into, and with the consciousness that God has made you a means of procuring it for me."

I embraced him, recommending him to the love and mercy of God, and hastened to the place of execution.

He being soon called after me, got up from his couch, and followed those which were to conduct him. Coming out of the prison and getting into the coach, he bowed to those that were standing around. Upon the way to the place of execution, he partly spoke to the officer who was with him in the coach, partly sat in deep meditation.

As soon as both the condemned were arrived in their respective coaches near the scaffold, and Count Brandt had mounted it first, I got into the coach of Struensee, and ordered the coachman to turn about, to prevent his having the prospect of the scaffold.

"I have

" I have ſeen him already," ſaid he. I could not recollect myſelf ſo ſoon, and he finding my uneaſineſs, ſaid, with a ſmiling countenance, " Pray do not mind me. I ſee you ſuffer. Remember that God has made you an inſtrument in my converſion. I can imagine how pleaſing it muſt be to you to be conſcious of this. I ſhall praiſe God with you in eternity that you have ſaved my ſoul."

I was ſtill more affected than before, and ſaid, that I ſhould look upon this tranſaction of mine as the moſt remarkable one during my whole life, ſince God had bleſſed it with ſo ſelf-rewarding a ſucceſs. It was a pleaſing thought to me, that we ſhould continue our friendſhip in a future world.—I ſhould have comforted him, but he, in this caſe, comforted me. He deſired me then to remember him to ſeveral of his acquaintance, and to tell ſome of them, that if he, by his converſation and actions, had miſled them in their notions of virtue and religion, he, as a dying man, acknowledged the injury he had done, begged them to efface theſe impreſſions, and to forgive him.

After ſome ſilence on both ſides, he aſked me: " Suppoſe God, ſince he knows all things, ſhould ſee that in caſe I had lived longer, I ſhould

not have kept faithfully to my preſent principles and ſentiments; could that have any influence upon that judgment which I ſhall ſoon receive?" I anſwered,

God judges by actions that are committed, not by thoſe that are not. He judges men according as he finds them when they leave this world. He is love itſelf, and has no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth. He certainly will not condemn any one who dies in fulfilling thoſe conditions under which he has promiſed his pardon. He then continued:

"It is true, I returned late to God, but I know that he who is from eternity, cares not for the length or ſhortneſs of time in which man has endeavoured to pleaſe him. Our Saviour ſays, without determining any thing relative to this matter, "He that comes to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out;" I therefore will make myſelf eaſy that I have kept ſo long from God and virtue."

On ſeeing the great number of ſpectators, I told him, that among theſe thouſands, were many that would pray to God to have mercy upon him.

"I hope ſo, ſaid he, and the thought pleaſes me." He ſoon after added:

" It is a ſolemn ſight to ſee ſo many thouſands of people together; but what are theſe thouſands, when compared with the whole ſum of all God's creatures, and how very little appears one ſingle man in ſuch a compariſon? Nevertheleſs God loves every individual man ſo much, that he has procured his ſalvation by ſacrificing his own ſon. What a love is this!

" You ſee me, continued he, outwardly, the ſame as I find myſelf within." And I perceived, all the while I was ſitting with him in the coach, no alteration, but that he was pale, and that it was more difficult for him to think and to converſe than it was ſome days before, or even this very morning. However, he had his full preſence of mind, knew ſeveral of thoſe that ſtood about the coach, bowed to many by pulling off his hat, and to ſome he bowed with a friendly mien.

" My eaſe, ſaid he, is not a forced one. I cannot recollect any cauſe from which this eaſe ariſes, that could diſpleaſe God. I am not ambitious to gain the applauſe of men, and I do not promiſe that I ſhall not ſhew any uneaſineſs upon the ſcaffold. I now have diſagreeable ſenſations, and I ſhall have more there, which I will not endeavour to conceal. But you may be aſſured, that my ſoul will look with calmneſs

and

and hope beyond death. And how little is that which I am going to ſuffer, when I compare it with the ſufferings Chriſt bore when he died. Recollect only his words: "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" and conſider, what excruciating pain it muſt have cauſed him, to hang for ſeveral hours on the croſs before he died!"

I exhorted him again not to ſhew any affected fortitude in theſe laſt moments which was not natural to him. Such affectations would certainly diſpleaſe God, and if he now ſtill would mind what the ſpectators might think, I muſt tell him, that only a few ſhort-ſighted people would believe his affected firmneſs to be true.

I then ſaid: Chriſt prayed for his murderers even on the croſs. May I rely upon your leaving this world with the ſame ſentiments of love towards thoſe you might have reaſon to think your enemies?

"Firſt, ſaid he, I hope that there is no one who has a perſonal hatred againſt me; but that thoſe who have promoted my misfortunes, have done it with an intent of doing good. Secondly, I look upon myſelf already as a citizen of ano-

ther world, and that I am obliged to entertain ſentiments conformable to this dignity: and I am ſure, that if I was to ſee thoſe, who might perhaps be my enemies, here in the bliſs of that world which I hope to enter into, it would give me the higheſt ſatisfaction. I pray to God that if my enemies might repent of their behaviour towards me, this repentance may induce them to look out for that ſalvation which I promiſe myſelf through the mercy of God."

Though I could not ſee the ſcaffold, yet I gueſſed, from the motion of the ſpectators, that it was Struenſee's turn to mount it. I endeavoured to prepare him for it by a ſhort prayer, and within a few moments we were called. He paſſed with decency and humbleneſs through the ſpectators, and bowed to ſome of them. With ſome difficulty he mounted the ſtairs. When we came up, I ſpoke very conciſely, and with a low voice, upon theſe words of Chriſt: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live." It would have been impoſſible for me to ſpeak much and loud, even if I had attempted it.

I obſerve here that he ſhewed not the leaſt affectation in his conduct upon the ſcaffold: I found

found him to be one who knew that he was to die, on account of his crimes, by the hands of the executioner. He was pale, it was difficult for him to ſpeak, the fear of death was viſible in his whole countenance; but at the ſame time, ſubmiſſion, calmneſs and hope were expreſſed in his air and deportment.

His ſentence, and afterwards the King's confirmation of it, were read to him; his coat of arms was publickly ſhewn and broken to pieces. During the time that his chains were taking off, I put the following queſtions to him: Are you truly ſorry for all thoſe actions by which you have offended God and men?

"You know my late ſentiments on this point, and I aſſure you they are this very moment ſtill the ſame."

Do you truſt in the redemption of Chriſt, as the only ground of your being pardoned before God?

"I know no other means of receiving God's mercy, and I truſt in this alone."

Do you leave this world without hatred or malice againſt any perſon whatever?

"I hope

" I hope nobody hates me perſonally; and as for the reſt, you know my ſentiments on this head, they are the ſame as I told you juſt before."

I then laid my hand upon his head, ſaying: Then go in peace whither God calls you! His grace be with you!

He then began to undreſs, and enquired of the executioners how far he was to uncover himſelf, and deſired them to aſſiſt him. He then haſtened towards the block, that was ſtained and ſtill reeking with the blood of his friend, laid himſelf quickly down, and endeavoured to fit his neck and chin properly into it. When his hand was cut off, his whole body fell into convulſions. The very moment when the executioner lifted up the axe to cut off his hand, I began to pronounce ſlowly the words; " Remember Jeſus Chriſt crucified, who died, but is riſen again." Before I had finiſhed theſe words, both hand and head, ſevered from the body, lay before my feet.

* * * * * *

How wonderful is God, and how great his care for the ſalvation of men, that are ſtill capable of being ſaved! But how different is the judgment we are to pronounce over ſuch men, according

according to the principles of the kingdom of God, from that which the world pronounces! If Count Struenſee had remained in his former proſperity, and died a natural death, he might have been called a great and enlightened man through all ages, even if he had been at the bottom the greateſt villain. The world has ſeen him die a malefactor; but the diſpoſition in which he left the world, will be a ſufficient inducement for true chriſtians to forgive him the ignominy where-with he had ſtained his life, and to praiſe God that he died well.

# COUNT STRUENSEE's

# OWN ACCOUNT

How he came to alter his SENTIMENTS of
RELIGION.

WRITTEN WITH HIS OWN HAND.

## To Dr. MUNTER.

YOU desire, dear friend, that I should leave behind me * my thoughts, how I was induced to alter my sentiments in regard to religion. You have been witness of it. You have been my guide, and therefore I am infinitely obliged to you. I satisfy your desire with so much greater pleasure, as it will afford me an opportunity of recollecting the train of ideas and impressions of mind which have produced my present sentiments, and confirm my present conviction.

My unbelief and my aversion to religion, were founded neither upon an accurate inquiry into its truth, nor upon a critical examination of those doubts that are generally made against it. They arose, as is usual in such cases, from a very general and superficial knowledge of religion on one side, and much inclination to disobey it's precepts on the other, together with a readiness to entertain every objection which I discovered

* The reader will recollect what is said about this account in the Preface, and p. 142, 143, 163, 164.

againſt it. You know how indifferent that common inſtruction in religion is, which is given in public ſchools: yet I was to blame not to have made uſe of the private inſtructions and example of my parents. Since my fourteenth year, all my time was taken up in ſtudying phyſic. If I afterwards ſpent much time in reading other books, it was only to divert myſelf, and to extend my knowledge of thoſe ſciences by means of which I hoped to make my fortune. The violence of the paſſions which made me abandon myſelf in my youth to all ſenſual pleaſures and extravagancies, left me ſcarce time to think of morality, much leſs of religion.

When experience afterwards taught me how little ſatisfaction was to be found in the irregular enjoyment of ſuch pleaſures, and reflection convinced me that a certain inward ſatisfaction was requiſite for my happineſs, ſuch as cannot be attained either by the obſervance of particular duties, or by the omiſſion of ſcandalous exceſſes: I therefore endeavoured to imprint in my mind ſuch principles as I judged proper to govern my actions, and which I thought would anſwer the end I had in view. But how did I undertake this taſk? My memory was filled up with moral principles, but at the ſame time, I had

had various excuſes to reconcile a complying reaſon with the weakneſſes and the infirmities of the human heart. My underſtanding was prepoſſeſſed with doubts and difficulties, againſt the infallibility of thoſe means by which we arrive at truth and certainty. My will was (if not fully determined, yet) ſecretly much inclined to comply only with ſuch duties, as did not lay me under the neceſſity of ſacrificing my favourite inclinations. Theſe were my guides in my reſearches.

I took it for granted, that in matters merely relative to the happineſs of man, neither a deep underſtanding nor wit or learning were required; but our own experience and ideas only, of which every one muſt be conſcious, were ſufficient to find out the truth. The neceſſity of avoiding all diſagreeable ſenſations of pain, of ſickneſs, of reproaches, as well our own as thoſe of others, made me think that an exact obſervation of duties towards myſelf and my neighbour, were of the greateſt conſequence. However, I believed, from the conſideration of God and the nature of man, that there were no particular obligations towards the ſupreme Being, beſides thoſe which are derived from the admiration of

his greatneſs and the general gratitude on account of our exiſtence. The actions of man, as far as they are determined by notions produced by natural inſtincts, by agreeable or diſagreeable impreſſions of external objects, of education, of cuſtom, and the different circumſtances he is in, appear to me to be ſuch, as could in particular inſtances neither pleaſe nor diſpleaſe God, any more than the different events in nature, which are founded in its eternal laws. I was ſatisfied in obſerving that general as well as particular inſtances, tended to one point, namely the preſervation of the whole; and this alone was what I thought worthy of the care of a ſupreme Being. My attention therefore was chiefly fixed upon the duties I owed to my neighbours. The obſervance of which would as well promote my outward happineſs, as give me inward ſatisfaction.

The deſire which every one feels to be virtuous, and a natural inclination for actions uſeful in ſociety, induced me to uſe my utmoſt endeavours to acquire a habit of virtue. But how could I find out true virtue, as I did not ſeek for it, where it was only to be found? What a difference is there in the opinions of philoſophers

phers about its nature and its motives; how contradicting is the judgment of men on account of the effects it produces in particular cases! Yet these were to determine my method of acting, even if God did not judge me, and I should resign myself up to my conscience, which is so easily misled, so often overpowered by passions, and so frequently not to be heard at all. I found at least, how easy it was to deceive ourselves in regard to our sentiments, though they were entirely left to our own judgment. I found on the other side many that were well inclined, though they were quite inactive. These and other reflections induced me to think, that virtue consisted in nothing else, but in actions which are useful to society, and in a desire of producing them.—Ambition, love of our native country, natural inclination to what is good, a well regulated self-love, or even the knowledge of religion, when they are considered as motives of virtue, I looked upon as indifferent things, according as they happened to make different impressions upon particular persons.—Reason and reflection were, in my opinion, the only teachers and regulators of virtue. He is to be counted the most virtuous whose actions are the most useful, the most difficult to be practised, and of the most extensive influence;

and no one could be blamed who obſerved the laws of his country, and the true principles of honour.

I thought I had found in the nature of man ſufficient powers and ſprings to make him virtuous. Revealed religion I looked upon as unneceſſary, ſince it could only convince men, whoſe underſtandings were leſs enlightened, of the obligations of virtue. The effects of religion I never had perceived within me, at leaſt I never had regarded them. Its doctrines ſeemed to contradict all the reſt of my notions. Its morals appeared to me too ſevere, and I believed I found them full as clear, perfect and uſeful in the writings of philoſophers. If you add to this, the following doubts: Religion is known but among a ſmall part of mankind,—it makes very little impreſſion upon the mind,—its abuſe has produced a great many fatal conſequences,—few of thoſe that know it, act agreeably to its precepts,—but very little hope there is of a future life,—God's mercy will forgive the faults of error and precipitation,—the nature of man contradicts the precepts of religion and oppoſes them:—and you will eaſily imagine what inferences I drew from thence.

Reaſon guided by underſtanding, ſupported by ambition, ſelf-love, and a natural inclination to what is good, became now the principles which determined my actions. To how many errors and miſtakes was I expoſed! I found it not difficult to excuſe my favourite paſſions, and give myſelf up entirely to the gratification of them. The indulgence of my ſenſual deſires appeared to me, at the moſt, to be only weakneſs, if they were not attended with bad conſequences either to myſelf or to others, and this could be prevented by prudence and circumſpection. I found that many who pretended to honour and virtue, yet indulged them, and excuſed them. The manners of the times permitted ſilently liberties which were condemned only by the too rigid moraliſt, but were treated with more indulgence and tenderneſs by thoſe, that are acquainted with the human heart. Continence was in my eyes a virtue produced by prejudice. Whole nations ſubſiſted without knowing or practiſing this virtue.

It is very humiliating to me, my dear friend, to repeat to you theſe falſe excuſes, which appear to me at preſent highly abſurd. However, they will be found adopted by all thoſe, that act not quite thoughtleſly, but attempt to apologize

by arguments for the irregularity of their life. How eaſy is it in this manner to palliate and to juſtify the indulgence of every one of our paſſions? The ambitious man finds in all that he does patriotiſm and a laudable ambition; the ſelf-conceited a noble pride, founded upon merit, and a juſtice which he owes to himſelf; the ſlanderer a love of truth, and innocent mirth, &c.

I hoped to eſcape thoſe errors by an accurate ſelf-examination, and an enquiry into the conſequences of my actions. But how was I able to do this, were it poſſible to anſwer only for their moſt immediate conſequences? Did I not deceive myſelf, in believing that I had the ſtrongeſt intentions of doing good, and did really as much as I was able to do? Was it infatuation, inſenſibility and affectation, when I flattered myſelf to find, firmneſs and tranquillity in my preſent misfortunes? When I ſearched into the cauſes of them, I conſidered only the political ones, and how much could I find to excuſe myſelf, if I did but conſider the nature of my ſituation, and the accidents it was ſubject to? I had but a confuſed idea of my moral principles, and I could not reject them, without depriving myſelf of all comfort. My expectations of futurity I before told you: and

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by diſſipating my thoughts and directing them to other ſubjects, I could more eaſily bear my misfortunes, and ſupport my natural diſpoſition, as the impreſſion, an object makes upon our mind, grows ſtronger by conſtantly reflecting upon it.

In this condition, my dear friend, you found me, and we began our Conferences. You remember how much I thought myſelf convinced of my principles, how ſtrongly they were imprinted on my mind, and how much I guarded againſt every paſſion that could riſe within me. However, I found it but juſt to enquire into a matter that concerned my happineſs, and which might be of ſuch conſequence with regard to futurity. An opinion, where the greateſt probability amounts to certainty, receives ſtill greater by examining that which is oppoſite to it. And to anſwer the objections which can be made againſt it, requires at leaſt as much attention from us, as we beſtowed upon the examination of the arguments which induced us to embrace it.

Upon conſidering my moral principles, I began immediately to doubt, whether they might not have been the cauſe of my miſtaking what I

chiefly aimed at, namely, the inward ſatisfaction of my actions. I was very ſenſible, how much I deſerved the reproaches of my own mind as well as thoſe of others, if it was only on account of my unhappy friends, whoſe misfortunes greatly affected me. Might it not have been better, to have judged of my actions more by thinking from whence they aroſe, than to what they related, and what their conſequences were? How few would my pleaſures have been, and how little would my life have been! However, I ſhould now have leſs neceſſity for repentance and contrition, though before I muſt have had greater conflicts and ſtruggles with myſelf. The times of my ſuffering are only altered. If the firſt had taken place, my troubles would have been ſhorter, but now I feel an uniform and continued ſeries of diſagreeable ſenſations. I then ſhould have ſuffered only myſelf.—And what ſatisfaction have I received of all which fortune ſeemed to promiſe me? My paſſions were perhaps gratified, but in ſuch a manner as always left a void after them. My wiſhes were ſatisfied, but the anxiety I was under to preſerve my poſſeſſions, took away the greateſt part of their pleaſure. I enjoyed a variety of pleaſures, which by their nature deſtroy one another, and are at the moſt nothing more than diſſipations.

I grew at laſt inſenſible to the pleaſures of life, which is the natural conſequence of being in poſſeſſion of every thing which can render life eaſy and agreeable. I did not enjoy the comforts of friendſhip and ſociety, as the ſituation I was in was extremely diſſipated, and it required attention to a hundred trifles; beſides, the impoſſibility of diverting my thoughts from the little dependance I could place on it, would not admit of any real ſatisfaction. Suppoſing too, that I even had good intentions, and the lawful means of putting them into practice, and that my faults were only the conſequences of inattention and natural weakneſs, I ſhould loſe all the comforts I might derive from the former, by reproaching myſelf on account of the latter. I might have avoided them, by recollecting all their conſequences, according to their different relations. However, even this was impoſſible when my paſſions repreſented to me the danger my own happineſs and that of others was in, and the impoſſibility of providing againſt conſequences which were then at a diſtance. When my paſſions and my reaſon were in oppoſition, and the underſtanding was to decide, I might have been always inclined in favour of that ſide where the pleaſure ſeemed neareſt, and

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pain at the greateſt diſtance. Ambition and ſelf-love, and the influence our actions have upon one another are eaſily explained, and in their application, found ſufficient to anſwer their purpoſes. I could not now deny but that my principles were not capable of procuring me moral tranquillity, that my paſſions had been the chief ſprings of all my actions, and that no other comfort remained for me, but that which is derived from the inconſtancy of human affairs. I might be indebted to my principles for my ſucceſs in life, and my activity: but I muſt reject them, if they induced me to commit an action which deſerves reproaches, and which deſtroys my inward happineſs.

I was ready to give up my former principles as ſoon as I could diſcover better. I ſaw that they were liable to two objections. My way of judging of the morality of my actions from their relations and conſequences, was neither ſafe nor certain. My arguments in favour of virtue, might be equally applicable to juſtify the gratification of my paſſions, as to controul them. They were not ſufficiently ſtrong in their effects, and were alſo liable to be miſinterpreted, when my paſſions became too impetuous. Conſcience, the inward ſenſe of what

what is good or bad, and the fear of God, ſeemed not to obviate this difficulty. I found ſufficient reaſons to diſallow them, and my ſenſuality would not permit me to feel their impreſſion. Should theſe have taught me how to act with propriety and juſtice in all circumſtances, and to make myſelf eaſy, though the conſequences, the opinion of men, and the reproaches of my friends had been againſt me? No doubt. But then my actions ſhould have been derived from my ſentiments, and theſe ſhould have had a certain fixed rule to direct them, to prevent me from falling into error.

I perceived my miſtake, that I had placed virtue in actions only, without regard to their intentions, and by this I had loſt what I was purſuing, inward contentment. *Gellert* ſhewed me the means by which I might have avoided it. *Jeruſalem* convinced me what ſtrength and aſſiſtance true devotion furniſhes us with. *Reimarus* removed the doubts I had, that God did not concern himſelf with the moral actions of men. I will not repeat the ſeries of meditations, which convinced me of the truth of what theſe excellent writers teach us. I ſhall only repeat a few

few of them, and thoſe only which made the ſtrongeſt impreſſion upon me.

Was it not the love of ſenſual pleaſures, which made me deny that truth, which my reaſon aſſented to, and repreſented other objects and falſe notions as matters of conſequence?—Is there more ſafety and wiſdom, where I find ſimple principles, which may be practiſed with clearneſs in all caſes without exception, or there, where the variety of opinions, and the conditions which are innumerable, require more time for enquiring than action? If the moral diſtinction between virtue and vice, is not to be founded on the intentions, none can pretend to virtue, at leaſt, it does not depend upon our own will. The prudent, the cautious, the crafty, the hypocrite ſhall then be virtuous; the ſimple, the careleſs, the unhappy, the ſincere ſhall then be called wicked. My inward ſatisfaction will depend on the opinion of others and on accidents, if I cannot judge of my intentions by ſome fixed rules.

It is a very narrow notion to think that the univerſe taken together, is only worth the attention of the ſupreme Being. We know that knowledge

knowledge and a combination of many particular events and operating cauſes, which all tend to one end, produce actions of the greateſt moral conſequence to ſociety. It is beyond man's capacity to repreſent to his mind theſe things at once. He loſes the ſight of the whole, by examining the parts ſeparately. He is therefore obliged to fix his attention only upon thoſe cauſes which are neareſt and moſt ſenſible in their effects. Thoſe which are more remote he muſt leave to chance, or which is the ſame thing, he muſt ſuppoſe, that they will not fail of their end, though they are not in his power. But let us go further. He that views the moſt remote poſſible event at one view, and knows how to direct every one of them to anſwer his particular deſign, and to remove with the greateſt facility the obſtacles which are in his way, deſerves undoubtedly the name of a great man. The more regularity and harmony he can give to every part, the more can he depend upon the event. It muſt be diſpleaſing, if he cannot effect this. The faults of ſingle ſoldiers cannot be pleaſing to a good general in time of action if he perceives them, and he needs muſt diſcover them. Many little irregularities render the whole imperfect. We overlook them, becauſe our abilities will not permit us to

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do otherwiſe, and we are uſed to deſpiſe what we cannot attain to for want of power. But it is abſurd to apply this manner of reaſoning to God, and to believe that he follows our example, and takes care of the whole without attending to particular imperfections. That poſition: God has regulated the whole in ſuch a manner, that the particular irregularities of men are of no conſequence, and therefore indifferent to him, is founded upon this principle; that man acts always according to a fatal neceſſity. God therefore will certainly obſerve, how far every individual acts by his free-will conſiſtently with his determination. Univerſal happineſs cannot take place unleſs every one contributes towards it.

It is no argument, that God has diſpenſed ſuch a number of good things in nature, and the inſtincts of man are ſo various, that every one may be happy. Others generally ſuffer and are made uneaſy when our poſſeſſions encreaſe, and our enjoyments are great. Therefore the deſire of encreaſing our happineſs in this manner, is inconſiſtent with our determination. The increaſe of our moral perfections can take place without detriment and for the benefit of the whole. The ſmalleſt tranſgreſſion in this reſpect

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muſt be diſpleaſing to God. What apologies can we make? Perhaps ſuch as a courtier makes when he deceives his maſter to ſerve his friend, or a miniſter of ſtate when he loſes ſight of the public good to ſerve his own private intereſt.

It is owing to pride and prejudice in favour of our own internal ſtrength, when we hope to be virtuous through our own powers. We commonly perceive in objects before us what we want to ſee. It is impoſſible to have all thoſe ideas preſent in our mind which are required to draw juſt concluſions. We find thoſe ſooneſt which anſwer our purpoſes. The cool philoſopher finds frequently that to be falſe, which he took for granted before he begun his inquiries. And ſince all this is moſt certain, how eaſy muſt it be for us to convince ourſelves, how uncertain our way of reaſoning is, when it concerns things which we earneſtly deſire, and when the queſtion is, whether we ſhall allow or refuſe ourſelves the enjoyment of them. A lively impreſſion, which preſents us with the arguments on both ſides, is the only means to keep us from error.

How many disagreeable moments did these reflexions cause me! They were sufficient to convince me how much I had erred from what I was striving for; how little I had acted according to the true end of my nature, and how much I was to blame. I felt with pain, that I had followed false principles and narrow prejudices. You know, how much I was concerned for the misfortune of those persons with whom I had been connected. Nothing was now left me, but to endeavour to lessen the uneasiness I felt, since I found myself the only cause of it. But my pain became more violent, whenever I considered my situation from that side, where it made the greatest impression upon me. The many consequences of my vices, and the thoughts that I had offended God, most deeply affected me.

However, my former turn of thought made me mistrust, whether my present sentiments were not perhaps more a consequence of my present situation of mind, than of the conviction of my understanding. The uncertainty I was under concerning the nature of my soul and its immortality, prevented me from giving my full assent. *Bonnet* answered all my doubts as far as mere reason can arrive at any certainty. I could not

not deny that my preſent diſpoſition of mind, if I compared it with a former one, was better adapted to enquire after truth and to find it out. Before, I uſed to paſs over every thing which oppoſed my paſſions, and found good what they deſired: but I was now more inclined to be cautious and miſtruſtful, and it is a great thing to acknowledge our faults. The more I conſidered my former doubts, the leſs reaſon I had to think them to be of any conſequence. I examined every particular argument in favour of my former opinion: but at laſt I was obliged to own with *Gellert*, that if all that we know from reaſon, of God, of our ſoul, and our moral happineſs was uncertain, truth muſt be folly, and error muſt be wiſdom.

You know, my dear friend, how much theſe truths increaſed my uneaſineſs: I ſaw continually new objects, which hitherto had remained undiſcovered, on account of the livelineſs of the firſt impreſſions. The indifference I had to any fixed principles, my neglect of every ſingle obligation, my remiſſneſs in doing good, when I had opportunity or abilities for it, the miſchief which my example, and the propagating of my principles might do, the diſpleaſure of God which my tranſgreſſions muſt draw upon me; all theſe cir-

cumſtances united produced in me the greateſt anxiety. And how could I leſſen the anxiety ſuch reflexions occaſioned me? I took the reſolution to act according to that truth which I had found. I had a lively ſenſe of my former tranſgreſſions, but from whence could I derive the hopes of repairing what was done, or burying it in oblivion? It is uncertain whether good intentions will always be equally ſtrong; perhaps new inticements and the errors of my underſtanding may overpower them. The thought which is directed towards God, the ſentiments, conſcience, and the recollection of its reproaches can be weakened. Virtue cannot prevent vice from being hurtful, much leſs can it repair the damage which is done. Time, opportunities and former ſituations were loſt to me, and but little comfort was left me from this view. When I reflected on the idea which reaſon afforded me of God, I had but little hopes to flatter myſelf that my ſins would be forgiven. If I attempted to form the moſt favourable idea of God's mercy, that he would conſider the weakneſs and imperfection of human nature, I ſaw at the ſame time his juſtice and immutability, which were directly contrary to this idea. The conſequences of actions happen in the moral world as they do in the natural, according to certain fixed rules. To theſe ſettled laws God leaves the fate of man,

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and his fate depends upon himſelf, ſince he acts with liberty. Experience teaches us ſufficiently that no exception is to be made to this rule. Every crime and every tranſgreſſion carries its puniſhment along with it. Perhaps no inſtance can be produced which would not convince us of the truth of this aſſertion, if we eſtimate man's happineſs according to what he feels within himſelf, and not according to the general notions we have of good fortune. The irregularity and variety of our paſſions are evils, and the painful conſciouſneſs of the crimes we have committed never leaves us. Will God produce good out of evil, to remove the misfortunes which our ſins brought upon us, and which are a proof of his diſpleaſure?

Of theſe truths I always have been convinced, but I looked upon them as neceſſary evils connected with our fate, which would ceaſe with this life, even if they could be called a kind of puniſhment. I could diminiſh the lively impreſſion of theſe evils by a firmneſs of ſoul, by coolneſs of mind acquired by practice, and a contemplation of the evils themſelves, without fancying them greater than they really are. Patience, I fancied, might make us indifferent about them, and diſſipation make us entirely forget them.

Supported by theſe conſiderations, I ſubmitted to my misfortunes, ſince I could not avoid them, and they appeared to me in this light leſs terrible. We are apt to ſuppoſe an old erroneous tenet to be true, as we are apt to believe an often repeated falſhood. That hope which makes death the end of all our misfortunes, requires the greateſt firmneſs and indifference to ſupport it. You know thoſe reaſons which ſerve to inſpire us with comfort in regard to a future life, agreeably to my former principles, and conſidering eternity in the view I did. However, the uncertainty of all this would have occaſioned the greateſt uneaſineſs, even at a time when I ſhould not have been diffident of my own ſtrength.

The continuation of my moral enquiries did not decreaſe this. Remembrance will be an eſſential matter, whereby my future ſtate is to be connected with my preſent one. How ſhould I obliterate the memory of theſe reproaches which torment me now? how ſhould I regulate my ſentiments? Every thing renewed the conſciouſneſs of my former reproaches, and I was ſo accuſtomed to my way of thinking, that it would, perhaps, be ſtill more difficult to leave it, than any other cuſtom I have been uſed to. I found this to be the fact; for my underſtanding,

though convinced, yet thought, doubted, apologized, and ſaw a poſſibility of my not being in the wrong. The repeating of thoſe reflexions which had ſhewn me my errors, brought me back to truth: however, I could not arrive at any certainty in regard to a future life, and the conſequences of my tranſgreſſions with reſpect to the Deity. The truths of revealed religion did not yet make any impreſſion upon my mind.

You gave me the Hiſtory of the three laſt Years of the Life of Chriſt; I read it, and how excellent did I find the doctrines it contained! Its moral principles are ſimple, clear, and adapted to every ſituation in life. Whoever knows how difficult it is to reduce a ſcience to general principles, cannot obſerve this without ſurprize, even if he conſiders Chriſt only as a mere man. I was aſhamed to find here again what I formerly had forgot, and afterwards believed it to be owing to ſeveral books of morality I had read. I was convinced that the ſpirit of revenge was wrong, but I did not remember that Chriſt had ever forbid it. The love of our enemies had never before been taught us, and it appeared to me contradictory to our nature. I wiſhed to be convinced, not only of this chriſtian duty, but

of all the other principles of Chriſt's doctrine. Thoſe objections which were made againſt Chriſt on account of his birth, his education in Egypt, and the inſtruction he received in the ſciences which were taught by the Jews, made me imagine that his doctrine was more than human. How could he be above the prejudices of education and inſtruction? how could he teach things quite contrary to them? There is nothing contradictory in his doctrines or in his actions. We can eaſily convince ourſelves of this, if we only avoid judging according to our own manners, cuſtoms and prejudices. Not to get acquainted with the Goſpel becauſe Chriſt was a Jew, is the ſame in reality as if one ſhould object to read the writings of Mendelſon *, becauſe he is a Jew. The life of Chriſt, publiſhed at Zurich, delivers the hiſtory in a modern ſtile, and in an uninterrupted connexion. Though the manner of writing, and the expreſſions uſed by the ſacred penmen, were not ſuch as I greatly objected to, yet they have prevented me from reading ſerious enquiries on the ſacred writings, ſince I uſed to read moſtly thoſe books which were written againſt them.

* Moſes Mendelſon is a learned Jew, now living at Berlin. He has acquired great reputation by his philoſophical writings. Some mention is made of him in the Critical Review, vol. xxxiv. p. 223.

A divine

A divine revelation had appeared to me unneceſſary, its hiſtorical evidence dubious, and the facts related ſeemed to be very improbable. I now began to be convinced of the neceſſity of a divine revelation; for many reaſons, and in particular the neceſſity of finding out ſtronger motives for virtue than thoſe which reaſon only, ſupply us with, would no longer let me doubt of it. *Bonnet* and *Leſs* proved to me the poſſibility and credibility of the miracles. *Weſt* might have been fully ſufficient to have convinced me of the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection, but you know I examined all the reſt of the arguments. I believed many facts which are taught in natural philoſophy, where I could not diſcover the cauſe and its effects; why did I doubt of the poſſibility of miracles, when the deſign intended by them is ſo clear? Certainly there was no other reaſon, but becauſe I was not inclined to it. I am now as ſure of the facts the truth of a divine revelation is founded upon, as if I ſaw them before me. When a number of credible witneſſes agree in things in which our ſenſes are only concerned, I am as much convinced of them, as if I knew them from my own experience. It was neceſſary for me to attain the higheſt degree of certainty in this reſpect, in order to remove all doubts which now and then perplexed my underſtanding; and

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I praiſe God, with a lively ſenſe of gratitude, that I have met with ſucceſs.

You know, my dear friend, with what a diſpoſition of heart I began theſe enquiries. My former principles taught me to guard againſt every violent affection. Uſe, the nature of my employments, and the manner in which I roſe to my former proſperity, had procured me a habit of acting in all circumſtances with coolneſs. I found I had reaſon to be apprehenſive, that in one point tenderneſs would get the better of my underſtanding, and this was friendſhip. This only made me ſenſible of the ſituation I was in; for neither the poſſeſſion nor the loſs of my former proſperity affected me much. I was always upon my guard againſt my fancy, and for this very reaſon I avoided reading poets and other authors that could inflame it. I was often doubtful about my opinions and miſtruſted them, but when I once had adopted them as true, I avoided further enquiry and change, becauſe they prevented my putting them in practice. My obſtinacy, and my indefatigable purſuit of the ſame object, together with the coolneſs I acted with, have contributed much to my proſperity and my misfortune, and they might have been the cauſe of making me loſe everlaſting happineſs, if the many

many proofs which I have heard and read of it, had not recovered me from my error.

The examination of the hiſtorical arguments of divine revelation with care and precaution, has ſatisfied and convinced me. Being certain of this, it was an eaſy matter for me to remove all my other doubts. I was certain there muſt be ſtronger arguments to convince us, than thoſe which mere reaſon furniſhes us with. A proper degree of ſelf-love, honour, and love of virtue, are liable to ſo many explanations, our underſtanding can ſo eaſily be impoſed upon, and our will is with ſo much difficulty reſtrained, from conſidering the object only from the point of view in which it is moſt agreeable. Nothing can have greater effect upon our conduct than a habit of devotion, and though I thought religion always uſeful for this purpoſe, I nevertheleſs believed, that a ſufficient knowledge of our duty, and a deſire of acting conformably to it, were at all times ſufficient motives for being virtuous.

I found the origin of religious ceremonies in the natural fears and infirmities of men; I ſaw how much the many revolutions which have happened, have increaſed them, and what influence the manners, cuſtoms, and ways of thinking of nations had had upon them.

This

This conſideration made me acknowledge with gratitude, the excellence of chriſtianity, whoſe ceremonies are ſo clear and well founded. We accuſtom ourſelves to thoſe things which we ſee daily; we perceive how they happen, but are unacquainted with their remote cauſes, which, at laſt, loſe all their effect. For this very reaſon the idea of the exiſtence of a God, and his providence over all things, is ſo little diſcoverable in our actions. Our internal ſenſations, conſcience, and the contemplation of nature, ſeldom carry us ſo far back as to make any alteration in our moral conduct. The will of God, in regard to our happineſs, remains doubtful to our reaſon, as long as it is left to the deciſion of our underſtanding. The various revelations in the Old Teſtament, prophecies, laws, and remarkable puniſhments, could be looked upon as impoſtures of men, and as things which aroſe from natural cauſes: but ſince Chriſt has come into the world, and told us that his doctrine was the will of God, and that he was ſent to inſtruct us, and that he himſelf was the true God; no further excuſe remains for our ignorance and error. Every one to whom the opportunity is offered, and who will accept of it, can eaſily convince himſelf of its truth.

An unexceptionable evidence is as certain as our own experience, and whoever wants the latter teſtimony, may conſider the preſent ſtate of the Jews, who are living witneſſes of the truth of Chriſt's prophecies. No perſecution, oppreſſion and contempt could ever induce this people to mix with other nations, and to adopt their manners and cuſtoms. The wonders by which Chriſt has confirmed his divine miſſion can be proved with the ſame certainty. They were performed without any preparations, without any circumſtances that might have impoſed upon the ſenſes, without any previous expectation, before a number of incredulous ſpectators, in ſuch a manner that no impoſition can poſſibly be ſuſpected. They were beſides of ſuch a nature that every man of common underſtanding might perceive, that thoſe means which were made uſe of never could produce ſuch effects. A man, born blind, recovered his ſight; one that had lain four days in the grave, came to life again; a paralytic was reſtored to health again;—and all this by only ſpeaking a word. If we were to ſuppoſe that in the regular courſe of nature ſuch a thing was to happen juſt at this time, or that God produced theſe events by the interpoſition of almighty power, it follows, in the firſt inſtance, that Chriſt muſt have been informed of it before;

and, in the ſecond, that God heard him. Both which are equally a miracle, and a proof of his divine miſſion.

As ſoon as I was convinced of this; nothing remained, but to examine whether the doctrine which he preached, and we are to believe, contained any thing that contradicted reaſon. He wiſhes me to be happy and to be virtuous; to ſeek for my happineſs not in ſenſual pleaſures and in the gratification of my paſſions; to love God above all things, and to deal with my neighbour as I wiſh to be dealt with myſelf. He enjoins me to believe that there is another life after this, where the condition I ſhall be in will depend on the ſentiments and actions of this preſent life; that without the aſſiſtance of God I am unable either to think or act virtuouſly; that God will do nothing extraordinary for me, to remove the fatal conſequences of my tranſgreſſions, which I have to fear in a future life; that God has ſent him to give me the moſt undoubted aſſurance of his juſtice, and his immutability: but that this, at the ſame time, is the greateſt proof of his love towards me, ſince through him I am made acquainted with the ſureſt way of becoming acceptable to the Supreme Being.—All this is very conſiſtent with reaſon.

But

But Chriſt commanded me beſides, to believe that he was very God and very man, and the ſon of God; and that in the divine nature the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt are one. This ſeemed to contradict all my notions which I hitherto had entertained. But I knew that the word of Chriſt was always truth, that he muſt be fully acquainted with theſe myſteries, and that I had not the leaſt reaſon to imagine, he would require of me to believe any thing that was contradictory to reaſon. It might be above my underſtanding; but how many things do we meet with in the courſe of nature, whoſe exiſtence we cannot deny, without being able to explain why they are ſo, and how they are connected with their cauſes? I thought myſelf obliged to believe theſe myſteries upon the word of Chriſt; nevertheleſs I conſidered them with great attention, without finding them contradictory. God might reveal himſelf unto us in a different manner from that he had hitherto made uſe of, though our reaſon was unable to explain it. God choſe for this the language of men, and thoſe ſigns by which we communicate our ideas to each other. The very God who ſpoke through Chriſt, was the ſame who made himſelf known to us as Father and Holy Ghoſt. It cannot be denied that God, when we conſider his nature as well as his attributes, could

not

not be able to produce various effects at the same time, without our being obliged to believe that his essence is divided. It therefore was the Supreme Being, which reason teaches us to be one, that operated through Christ, though it only appeared under a human form, and made itself known to us, since we ourselves could not perceive it by our senses. We are used to apply more common notions to less known objects, in order to explain more exactly the idea we have of them. This has recalled to my mind the idea of gravity, which in different bodies operates differently, though the power itself is always the same. I have not found any thing contradictory in this idea of the Trinity, notwithstanding that I have reflected upon this subject with great accuracy, and in more different views than I have done here. In the same manner I have found nothing contradictory in Christ's making known unto us God as Father and Holy Ghost.

How easily can we fall into errors if any one wants to give us an idea of a thing unknown to us, by comparing it with another we are acquainted with. I dare not apply, in such cases, every little idea annexed to the object, to the other which I want to explain it by. If I was to tell an Indian, that the water in our climate

grows

grows ſometimes as hard as ſtone, and he ſhould then think that ice might be made red hot, and be uſed for materials to build a houſe, he would think ſomething very abſurd. Chriſt has ſhewn us God under the character of a Father, in order to compare his love towards his ſon under a figure that was known to us. A philoſophical deſcription would not have cleared it up better. But if we were to apply to God every thing that falls under the notion of a father, we ſhould be liable to the ſame miſtake of the Indian. In the ſame manner we can conceive how Chriſt, the Son of God, was born from his Father. From all eternity God would make himſelf known to us by Chriſt, and the word, *beget*, conveyed to us the beſt idea of this myſterious tranſaction within the Deity. We can likewiſe form an idea of that relation which ſubſiſts between the Father and Chriſt, by thinking him the Son of God; we are only to ſeparate thoſe ideas which reaſon teaches us not to be applicable to God. The Son has his eſſence of the Father, and it is the ſame with that the Father has; he loves him, and what is his is likewiſe the Son's.

Laſtly, Chriſt promiſes, that after his departure, the ſpirit of God ſhould confirm theſe truths which he had taught. This was done in

a visible manner by those gifts which the Apostles received, and he continues to operate upon those who observe the doctrines of Christ, and, by so doing, are capable of making good resolutions, and of thinking and of acting as it pleases God.

God has now revealed himself in a threefold manner, and every one of them represents him to me as the author and promoter of my happiness. We are used to express compound ideas with a single word, to avoid prolixity. For this reason, the word, person, was made use of in the doctrine of the Trinity. If I now find a contradiction, when I say, "There is one God, but three persons in him," the fault is then in my understanding; its notions are not just, it combines the common notions of God and of a person in a strange and improper manner. If I was to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity, I should act like the Indian who would not believe the existence of ice, because he was told that it would melt and turn into water again in the summer and by the fire.

I reflect on Christ's redemption, to which my understanding has no objection. I am convinced how necessary it is for my happiness to know, that my actions are not indifferent to God: and now I am assured, with all historical certainty, that Christ

Chriſt lived, and was proved to be intimately connected with the Deity, by performing ſuch actions as cannot be explained by natural cauſes. He aſſures me of his friendſhip, and I cannot conceive what advantage could ariſe to him, or what intention he could have to deceive me. I am inclined to believe my friend in a matter, where his former tranſactions have convinced me that his knowledge is ſuperior to mine, if my underſtanding finds nothing contradictory in it. Chriſt tells me, that he knows the will of God, and that God himſelf ſpeaks to me through him, which certainly is the beſt way to learn his will. The doctrines he inculcates agree with thoſe which my own reaſon teaches to be neceſſary for my happineſs; and I was ſenſible how eaſily I could miſapply theſe doctrines, if I did not always remember, that God ſaw my actions. Whatever determined me formerly to act in ſuch a manner as my own happineſs required, I owed to other cauſes and intentions, and why ſhould I not have interpreted the actions and kindneſs of Chriſt in the ſame manner? He recalls to my memory whatever I know from political and natural hiſtory, and expreſly aſſures me that extraordinary events were deſigned for this purpoſe. He ſums up all theſe together in this ſingle propoſition: God loves man as a father. Now God

ſhews himſelf as a friend. Chriſt is deſpiſed and looked upon as an impoſtor, though he teaches nothing but the manner in which we may become happy, and performs actions which are beneficial to men. To convince me more fully of his ſincerity, he gives me the greateſt proof of his friendſhip: he ſuffers death in confirmation of a truth, of which was I not certain, and did not confirm it accordingly, I could not be happy. God, with whom Chriſt is cloſely connected, permits all this. Can I now ever doubt that God's providence extends to me? I know from reaſon that the regularity in my conduct muſt be pleaſing to God, and that it is impoſſible for me to act agreeably to it, if I had not a lively idea of God's omnipreſence. I know him now in the character of father and friend, and under both theſe denominations always ſhall repreſent him to me.

Chriſt enjoins me in particular to believe in him, and to remember his love towards me, and really without this I ſhould not be able to perform my duty. The more I reflect on theſe truths which he has taught me, the more I find how far I am from living in a manner that would pleaſe God. Should I not be extremely ſorry for having offended a friend whom I neglected, and

and would not know? I was uncertain whether there might be a future life, and whether the conſequences of my offences could have any influence upon it. Chriſt promiſes me, that God will avert theſe evils, if I place an unreſerved confidence in his friendſhip.—I am eaſy with regard to what is paſſed, however I know how ſoon a preſent idea effaces a former one: and this is the caſe when I ſtrongly deſire what I ſhould deny myſelf. The doctrine of Chriſt informs me of this likewiſe. The ſpirit of God will revive theſe doctrines within me, if I make myſelf well acquainted with them, and conſtantly endeavour to put them into practice.

There is nothing in my reaſon that could prevent me from being fully convinced, that theſe means Chriſt teaches me, are the only ones that can render me virtuous and acceptable to God. It is my own fault if I do not receive and make uſe of them; for I then refuſe to be happy. God will not, for my own ſake, interrupt thoſe regulations he has made in regard to future life. I muſt feel the bad conſequences of my neglect, and of the vain hopes which I placed in God's mercy. I am obliged to him that he has made himſelf known to me in ſo extraordinary a manner. I could not even expect to deſerve the

happy conſequences of the reſolution I had made of obeying Chriſt's precepts; ſince, without the perpetual aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God, I am unable to obey them, and ſince, notwithſtanding this aſſiſtance, I ſo frequently neglect and forget them.

This is entirely conſiſtent with the doctrine of Chriſt. I always believe theſe three but one God, and the idea I have makes the Trinity not different Deities. All this is conformable with my reaſon. However, I durſt not hope, conſidering God and myſelf, that this Supreme Being would be ſo merciful as to teach me how, according to the ſentiments of my own underſtanding, I could be happy. Full of gratitude and conſcious of my being unworthy, I adore it, and ſhall never deſiſt to adore and praiſe the mercy, ſhewn to me through Chriſt.

I was greatly affected when I read the life of Chriſt. It increaſed my pains, and gave me new ones. But I was afraid it was owing to my diſpoſition of mind, becauſe I was ſtill full of doubts. The examination of the truth of the chriſtian religion became more agreeable to me, the more I advanced in it. My reaſon was ſatisfied with it, but I did not find thoſe inward feelings,

feelings, which, as I had heard, were connected with true chriſtianity, according to the confuſed notions of ſome people. *Spalding's* book ſet me right in this point. I found here how difficult it is to get rid of opinions and ſentiments which are become a ſecond nature, though I was convinced that they were falſe and deſtructive. My doubts aroſe contrary to my wiſhes, and I did not paſs them over before I had examined them ſeparately, and had frequently reflected on the arguments for the truth of religion.

The application of its doctrines produced within me a lively repentance, ſorrow, ſhame, and ſentiments of humility. Without anxiety or fear I expected the comfort which the Goſpel promiſed me. To regulate my ſentiments agreeable to its precepts, was my chief employment. The perpetual remembrance of the greatneſs of God's mercy, which was ſhewn to me by the redemption of Chriſt, made me overcome thoſe difficulties I found aroſe from my natural diſpoſition. The pleaſure of finding a happineſs, which I hitherto had wilfully renounced, could not produce in me a lively joy, becauſe I remembered that I had been ſeeking it formerly in a manner that could not pleaſe God. It was

impoſſible to make myſelf perfectly eaſy. I was prevented from this, by the thought that if I had formerly entertained my preſent ſentiments, I might have thereby excited thoſe perſons, with whom I had been moſt intimate, to enquire after the ſame happineſs. Now I am praying to God that he may do it, and I am perſuaded he will, ſince Chriſt has promiſed it. Prayer takes away the uneaſineſs I have on this and other points, which are diſagreeable for me to remember. I direct my thoughts to God, repeat the doctrines of the Goſpel, reflect on their connexion, apply them to myſelf, and if I addreſs myſelf to God in prayer in the name of my Redeemer for theſe mercies, I find that theſe contribute to render me eaſy, and I admire with gratitude the power of religion.

I ſee now how little a chriſtian deſerves the reproach of being ſelf-intereſted. He prays, and receives no reward, but by endeavouring to pleaſe God, when he regulates his ſentiments according to his precepts. If God hears him, he acknowledges with gratitude, that the doctrine of Chriſt procured him the means for it, he remembers his own weakneſs and praiſes the aſſiſtance of God. No blind confidence in God's mercy, nor the hope of the happineſs of

a future life, inflame his imagination, which regulates itſelf after the diſpoſition the mind is in. *Bonnet* and *Lavater* conducted me gradually to hopeful proſpects of eternity, but I rather peruſe the writings of *Spalding*, *Alberti*, and others of this kind.

The remembrance how indefatigable I had been for many years together, in collecting and practiſing my former principles, obliged me to keep a watchful eye over myſelf, for fear they might inſenſibly have an influence upon my new ſentiments. How earneſtly do I wiſh to efface the impreſſion which I have made upon others. I never intended to propagate my principles, though I never denied them. I have reaſon to lament a crime, which I muſt be aſhamed to own even before a world that thinks as I did formerly; and I feel on this account, a more lively ſenſe of thoſe tranſgreſſions which I have committed againſt God. My ſenſe of friendſhip and humanity always recalls to my mind the bad example, and the ſeduction by which I have contributed to make others look upon ſenſual pleaſures as the chief end of our exiſtence. Nothing that relates to my preſent ſituation diſturbs me, except this and other reflections of this kind. To terror and a fear that deprives us of the uſe of reaſon,

I always

I always have been almoſt a ſtranger. Death was not terrible to me, ſince I looked upon it as a conſequence of natural cauſes, and a fate that is unavoidable. At preſent nothing appears dreadful to me, ſince I know that I depend upon God, and am convinced of the truth of religion, and expect a happy eternity.

I praiſe God ſincerely, that I arrived at this conviction, and I acknowledge it with a lively ſenſe of gratitude, that you, my dear friend, have conducted me to it. You choſe the only method which ſuits the diſpoſition of my mind. Rhetorical figures and declamations would have had but little effect upon me. Suppoſe you had endeavoured to enflame my imagination and paſſions, my principles would ſoon have compoſed them again. The doctrines of religion I always remembered; for in the earlier days of my life I had frequently read the Bible, though with ideas quite different from thoſe I entertain at preſent. Scripture expreſſions were familiar to me, and I afterwards had contracted habits to connect them with all the doubts and opinions which correſponded with my principles. Before my underſtanding was convinced that they were falſe, you could not expect that I ſhould ſincerely believe the truth of revelation. I ſoon

diſcovered

diſcovered my tranſgreſſion of moral duties; but you know, and I have told you how much ſelf-denial it coſt me, to acknowledge my errors. My pride would fain animate me to conquer the fear of eternity like any other fear. My deſire of being as happy in this world as poſſible, had taught me to deſpiſe every kind of danger, and this aroſe more from a cool reflection on the latter, than from a lively ſenſe of happineſs. Truth only could bring me back, and you left me to my own reſearches to diſcover it. You propoſed to me, only thoſe conſequences which my turn of thought and actions could have in regard to ſuch of my friends, as were concerned in my fate as well as I was in theirs. I was on this account always much affected, and this alone could put my mind in agitation. However, it could not have diſpoſed me to embrace religion, if I had not clearly ſeen its truth; and I am convinced I ſhould have embraced it before this time, if its evidence had ever been laid before me, and taught me in the manner you did. I found in religion what I wiſhed for, and what I thought I durſt not hope for. I knew its truths only under certain images and expreſſions, to which I at laſt familiarized myſelf ſo much, that I forgot to combine any ideas with them. The firſt inſtruction can

be effected only by ſenſible repreſentations, but I uſed them afterwards for raiſing doubts againſt religion; and this prevented me from expecting thoſe comforts from it which I ſought for.

I had two reaſons for not examining more minutely the arguments for religion. You know the objections commonly made againſt the credibility of ſupernatural events and miracles. I was not acquainted with *Leſs* and *Bonnet*, and the objections appeared to me unanſwerable. When on the other hand I reflected on the redemption of Chriſt, it ſeemed to contradict all my notions. To ſhew to man the love and juſtice of God in a ſtronger light, redemption is commonly repreſented thus: That God was angry on account of the ſins of men, but loved them to ſuch a degree that he was deſirous of pardoning them. But this could not be effected without the death of his only begotten Son, who is God himſelf. The notions which I had of God, excited on this point particularly my attention, and it ſeemed hard to me to reconcile the neceſſity of redemption with them. I aſked: Cannot God forgive without this! I was puzzled when I conſidered redemption only in relation to God. But as ſoon as you taught me to reflect on it, in relation to man, you removed all my doubts, I found

found the neceſſity and the greatneſs of God's mercy in giving his own Son to make men happy.

As to practical chriſtianity, it always has offended me to find ſo many whoſe ſentiments and actions ſo little correſponded to their pretended faith, and ſenſe of truth. I diſcovered the effects of fancy and ſelf-deceit, ſince they were ſatisfied to have avoided ſenſual extravagancies, abandoning themſelves on the other ſide, under pretence of zeal for religion, to pride, envy, and a ſpirit of perſecution. This abuſe repreſented to me religion as an impoſture, which had always been more hurtful to human ſociety, than all irregular enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures. Imagination overlooks the means, and when it employs its powers with too much vivacity on the object, frequently through want of attention chuſes the wrong ones. To apply the truth of religion carefully to oneſelf, to be honeſt and comply with the duties of our ſituation in life, I think moſt neceſſary to entitle a man to the name of a chriſtian. In this view I have wrote this with pleaſure. I ſubmit it, my dear friend, to your judgment, and leave it to you to make that uſe of it which you think beſt.

*April* the 23d, 1772.

STRUENSEE.

THE

# HISTORY

OF

# Count Enevold Brandt,

During the Time of his IMPRISONMENT
until his DEATH.

WRITTEN BY

The Reverend D. HEE.

## *ADVERTISEMENT.*

*The public may rely on the authenticity of the following account. It is beyond a doubt that* D. Hee *drew it up, and publiſhed it himſelf, for reaſons which he mentions in the courſe of his narration. If the doctor ſhould not anſwer the expectations we might have of him as a writer, the tranſlator hopes, that his character as an honeſt man, and as a well-meaning divine, together with the ſubject of the narrative, will make ſome amends for it.*

Count Enevold de Brandt.

Engraved for the History of Count Brandt.

THE

# HISTORY

OF

# Count Enevold Brandt, &c.

THE ſentiments and the conduct of the unhappy Count Brandt, during the time of his impriſonment, were quite different from what they were in his proſperity, in which he offended all well inclined people. His behaviour was very edifying to thoſe that had an opportunity of converſing with him, in the latter part of his life, and who have ſincerity enough to own, that he was very much humbled, and that the words of our Saviour to St. Peter were applicable to him, when he ſays: 'When thou art

converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.' He ſhewed himſelf in this character to all the officers that had the watch over him.

Since he was made priſoner of ſtate, and even now after his death, many unjuſt, and, God knows, very untrue reports have been ſpread, as if his repentance had been hypocriſy, and his fortitude and chearfulneſs when he died, temerity and preſumption. I have always contradicted ſuch reports, and I do it now. Since I am fully convinced of the contrary, my conſcience will not permit me to keep ſilence, but rather to declare, that the alteration of his ſentiments was unfeigned, and that he hearkened to the invitations of the Goſpel. I do this with ſo much the more readineſs, ſince I believe that the greateſt part of what has been ſaid, has proceeded from a zeal to promote the cauſe of infidelity. There is a ſet of people, who think it their duty to defend incredulity, even at the expence of truth and conſcience. They have aſſiduouſly propagated every thing which has been ſaid about that levity of behaviour in the Count, which I myſelf obſerved in the beginning, but which he owned and ſo much repented of afterwards. I ſhall not apologize for what might have happened before I came,

nor

nor for that which was visible even in the beginning of my visiting him; I rather shall praise the mercy of God, which has shown its power so surprizingly afterwards, and confirmed what the Apostle says: 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'

Count Brandt received the best of educations. He saw none but good examples in the house of his parents, who had chosen the best tutors to form his young heart for the fear of God. He himself was sensible of this in his prison, and assured me that he very often had felt the power of the converting grace of God within his soul. He recollected in particular the time when he was first admitted to the Lord's Supper, by the Rev. Mr. Piper, at Copenhagen; at which time, according to his own words, he received the sacrament with a fervent devotion: he added, he could never forget the words of the clergyman, which made so great an impression upon his mind: 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'

On the 23d of February, the Right Reverend the Bishop Harboe sent me, the King's own orders, whereby I was desired to visit

Count Brandt, who was priſoner in the caſtle *. I was not over-pleaſed with this charge, knowing too well the ſentiments and the former life of the Count. He had been the greateſt voluptuary, and a friend to all thoſe vices which are generally annexed to this character, and one that turned every part of religion into ridicule.

The next day I was introduced to him by General Hoben, as the clergyman with whom he might ſpeak about religion. He received me with great civility, and I, on my ſide, aſſured him how much I ſympathized with him in his misfortunes. I wanted to gain his confidence, and therefore aſked him, how he could ſupport himſelf in his diſtreſſed condition? He ſaid, "His mind was very much compoſed and calm;" to which I replied: that it was a great advantage he enjoyed, and that I wiſhed his eaſe of mind might be built upon a good foundation; upon which I took an opportunity to ſpeak of religion as the only ſource of com-

* General lieutenant Hoben, the commander of the caſtle, had aſked Count Brandt: If he deſired to converſe with a divine? His anſwer was, he had no objection to it, but he ſhould like to know who was to be the clergyman, that was to attend him. He was told that this entirely depended on the will of the king.

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fort. He then ſaid, " That, he believed, the report that he had no religion, had reached me likewiſe." I ſaid, I could not deny this; and I was therefore the more ſorry, ſince he wanted what was moſt neceſſary, and what could be moſt uſeful to him both at preſent and in futurity.

" He then aſſured me that he never had been entirely without religion, though he muſt own that he did not ſpeak always with due reſpect of it."

Finding that he had no intention to conceal his former way of thinking, I therefore aſked him, if he ſhould not like that we might be left alone to carry on our converſation by ourſelves. He ſaid, " He was ready for it." I then deſired the officer who was upon watch, and who was with him day and night, to leave the room; which was the caſe afterwards always whenever I came. I now reminded him of what he had told me before, that he never had been without a ſenſe of religion, not even then when he ridiculed it.

He confirmed what he had ſaid, but owned that he had ſeveral doubts about religion. I

told him that doubting was very natural to us, and even good chriſtians now and then might be made uneaſy by doubts, but that it was ſinful to raiſe doubts, and entertain them with delight.

His doubts were about the fall of man, original ſin, and ſome other matters concerning religion. When I had given him an anſwer to theſe doubts, I exhorted him to leave his careleſs way of thinking, and not to obſtruct the way to truth, by wilfully prejudicing himſelf againſt it. He ſaid, " That he had formerly talked very freely againſt religion, but that many things he had ſaid, were only produced by a deſire of ſhewing himſelf witty."

When I exhorted him, ſince he ſaw himſelf how badly he had acted, and into what miſery he by his contempt of religion had thrown himſelf, to mind now the time which was left him, and to look out for the ſalvation of his ſoul, he ſeemed to be greatly moved: particularly when I put him in mind of that good education he had enjoyed in the houſe of his parents, who took all poſſible care to prevent the ruin of his ſoul. When I repreſented to him the tears of his pious mother, on account of the unhappy condition

condition he was in, and the dangerous ſituation of his ſoul, he burſt out into tears, ſo that I myſelf began to be very much moved. Many more things being ſaid, and exhortations given, I took my leave of him, aſking if it would be agreeable to him, that I ſhould call again? To which he replied: "He ſhould be glad to ſee me at any time."

I left him with good hopes, and heard ſoon after of the effects of my viſit; for his levity, to which he was even in his priſon addicted, ſeemed to be checked. According to the account given to the commander of the caſtle by the officer who had the watch, he not only had been very quiet, but had alſo burſt out in tears for very near an hour and a half together, ſitting all the while on his bed.—But as ſoon as he had eaſed his mind by his tears, his levity appeared again, for he ſang an air afterwards. This, however, did not diſcourage me, nor abate my hopes. I viſited him the next day again, and found that my viſits were really not diſagreeable to him; for he ſaid, "He had longed to ſee me."

Our converſation of this day turned upon ſeveral religious ſubjects. I exhorted him to make the beſt uſe of his time, and to turn his thoughts towards God; and for this very reaſon I ſtrongly

recommended prayer to him. I aſſured him that I had prayed fervently to God that he might ſave his ſoul, and I ſhould continue doing the ſame. He thanked me for this, and acknowledged, that the compaſſion for him which I had ſhewn the day before, had gained me his heart, and had made me dear to him. I ſpoke ſeveral things after this, and found that my exhortations had ſome effect upon him, for he very ſeldom, when I was with him, even to the laſt day of his life, was without tears in his eyes, ſo often as I ſpoke to him about his former life, the depravity of his heart, and the greatneſs of God's mercy.—He owned that he earneſtly deſired the pardon of God, through Chriſt his Redeemer, of which he, as he himſelf ſaid, ſtood greatly in need; although the natural diſpoſition of his heart might not be bad, yet it would not juſtify him before God, in whoſe eyes he muſt appear as a very great ſinner.

In the mean time a rumour was ſpread, and I heard of it, that he, even in my preſence, with another perſon who ſat next him, had made uſe of words which betrayed the great levity of his mind. I was very ſorry to hear ſuch things, and the next time I ſaw him, I very earneſtly ſpoke to him about this report, and appealed

pealed to his own conſcience, whether he had been guilty of ſuch a thing or not. He ſeemed to be affected on the occaſion, and declared " He was not ſorry on account of what the people ſaid; it grieved him rather that I myſelf ſhould entertain ſuch thoughts of him." I aſſured him it was no pleaſure to me to entertain them, but my conſcience obliged me to admoniſh him concerning this report, that I might ſpare myſelf any future uneaſineſs about it. However, he owned, " That it was poſſible *ſuch words* might have eſcaped him, on account of the levity of his heart, but he hinted, that ſome perſon or other, that wanted to bring ſuch reports among the people, had given him an occaſion for it, of which he made uſe, whilſt his heart was not upon its guard."—I exhorted him to beg God to forgive him this tranſgreſſion, and to be watchful over himſelf, that if opportunities ſhould offer themſelves of committing ſuch an action again, he might reſiſt in time: that he had better give no anſwer at all to things which might induce him to exert his vanity, but rather ſhew himſelf a penitent ſinner, who was as anxious to edify others by his converſation now, as he formerly had been to corrupt them by it.—He anſwered, " He was not able yet to ſhew himſelf as a religious man before others, but he ſhould follow

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my advice, and give no anſwer to things that could diſhonour himſelf and others."—I could deſire of him no more at preſent, but exhorted him to ſearch diligently the wretchedneſs of his moral condition, and to pray to God to aſſiſt him in this ſelf examination.

I could eaſily imagine, that in my abſence, when he had nothing to entertain himſelf with, his former vanity and levity would return again; I therefore offered to bring him ſome religious books, that he might improve in what is good. He thanked me for it, and deſired I would not forget it.

When I paid him my next viſit, I brought him the tranſlation of *Gibſon*'s Paſtoral Letters, for I thought this book might be uſeful to him on account of the ſolid arguments it contains for the truth of the chriſtian religion, particularly ſince the Count had formerly pretended to be a freethinker and a deiſt; I gave him likewiſe ſome of Dr. *Doddridge*'s writings. He took theſe books with a kind of eagerneſs, and told me afterwards that he had been edified by them. I likewiſe brought him a Bible, and heard at another time that, according to his own confeſſion, the 53d chapter of the prophet Iſaiah, and the 13th of St. Luke had made a great impreſſion

preſſion upon him. He read ſome Pſalms of David to me, and deſired me to explain ſeveral paſſages which he did not quite underſtand. I did it, and he ſeemed to be pleaſed, for during the whole time I was ſitting by his ſide, he would fix his eyes very attentively upon me. Now and then he would ſtart ſome objections, but I cannot ſay that they ever ſhewed any levity of heart, or the leaſt of malice, but rather tended to a deſire of better information.—He begged of me to bring him *Hervey's Meditations*, and *Newton on Prophecies*, as the latter is tranſlated into Daniſh by Commodore Eſſura. He told me afterwards that the reading of theſe books had much edified him, particularly the latter, ſince it contained ſuch clear proofs of the divinity of the Scriptures, upon which all religion is built.

However, the reports of his pretended levity did not ceaſe, and that his conduct in my abſence was quite different from that when I was preſent: yet I found theſe reports, from the following reaſons, to be falſe, and that they were the idle invention of ill-meaning people. The converſations we had together convince me that his expreſſions were the ſentiments of his heart, which began to be averſe to worldly things. Beſides, I enquired of the honeſt and venerable commander of the caſtle,

caſtle, if any one of the officers that guarded him, and who were to give an account of him every morning, had mentioned any thing to this purpoſe? He aſſured me it was all falſe, and that the Count, ſince I had brought him theſe books, had amuſed himſelf with them, and that he ſcarcely ever laid the Bible out of his hands; for which reaſon he very ſeldom ſpoke of any thing elſe, much leſs of any thing that could give offence. The alteration of his ſentiments appeared likewiſe, as the commander obſerved, from his behaviour before the committee that ſat on his affairs, who teſtified that he not only freely anſwered the queſtions laid before him, but that he even confeſſed more than he was requeſted to do. The commander added, that if any thing indecent had happened, he would have informed me of it. I was pleaſed to hear this, and I was ſtill more ſo, ſince every one of the officers that had been upon watch aſſured me, that his converſation was not only decent, but likewiſe oftentimes edifying; for he frequently repreſented to them what comforts religion adminiſtered to a man who was convinced of its truth and importance; it was the only means to make our minds compoſed, which happineſs he enjoyed, and was indebted for it to religion. He aſſured them, that during his proſperity,

proſperity, and in the enjoyment of all luſtful pleaſures, he felt no real ſatisfaction of mind.

I was ſtill more convinced of the falſity of theſe reports, ſince ſome things were ſaid to have happened whilſt I was with him, which I knew were not true. It was ſaid, for inſtance, that when I was once with him, I, according to cuſtom, had found him very devout; but when I had left the priſon, I had liſtened at the door, which was bolted, and hearing from within ſome things which betrayed his levity, I had returned to him again, and reproached him on account of his conduct. This report, which, in ſome reſpects, concerned myſelf, convinced me clearly by its untruth, that ſome malicious perſons invented and propagated all theſe ſtories, for the ſake of rendering the reverence the Count paid to religion ſuſpicious, leſt his example might open the eyes of thoſe profeſſing his former principles. The Count himſelf hinted to me, that a certain perſon, whom he named, had propagated the moſt wicked and low expreſſions, which he was ſaid to have dropped on account of his approaching death and execution. This ſame man, or ſomebody elſe like him, has given out, that I had denied giving the ſacrament to the Count, becauſe his heart was ſo hardened. How great

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an untruth this is, the remainder of my narrative will ſhew.

I now was fully ſatisfied on account of theſe reports, and exhorted him to go on in the manner he had begun, till he had finiſhed his courſe. I heard with pleaſure, that he became a preacher of repentance himſelf. With great freedom he owned now before me and others, that his impriſonment was the means of ſetting his ſoul at liberty, and he found his chains ſo little troubleſome to him, that he would oftentimes take them up and kiſs them. " For, ſaid he, when I believed myſelf to be free, I was a miſerable ſlave to my paſſions; and now, ſince I am a priſoner, truth and grace have ſet me at liberty." He further pitied the miſerable condition of thoſe that were under the yoke of unbelief and ſin, which he himſelf had worn, and kept himſelf in it by reading deiſtical writings. He mentioned, among the reſt, the works of Voltaire, to whom he owed very little that was good. He ſaid, he had ſpent upon his travels four days with this old advocate for unbelief, and had heard nothing from him but what could corrupt the heart and ſound morals. He was very ſorry for all this, but was much pleaſed that he had found a taſte for the true word of God, whoſe

efficacy upon his heart, ſince he read it with good intentions, convinced him of its divine origin. On this occaſion he ſpoke of Struenſee, and ſaid, he was a man without any religion, who, from his infancy, according to his own confeſſion, never had any impreſſion or feelings of it. As to himſelf, he aſſured me, that though he had been far from being virtuous, yet he always entertained a ſecret reverence for religion, and had ſpoken ſeveral times about it to Struenſee, in hopes of bringing him to better ſentiments, but he never would hear him. It appeared to me a little odd, that the blind ſhould thus have led the blind: I therefore anſwered nothing, thinking it might perhaps be his ſelf-conceit that made him ſpeak ſo, or that he wanted to make me entertain a better opinion of his errors than I had reaſon for, therefore I would not tempt him to ſupport an untruth by defending what he had told me. But I found afterwards that he had ſpoken the truth, when I was deſired by D. Munter, in the name of Struenſee, to come to him, as he had ſomething to tell me, which was to be communicated to Count Brandt. The commander of the caſtle told me this meſſage of D. Munter, and my anſwer was, that I was ready to call upon Struenſee, if he (the commander) and D. Munter would be preſent. My requeſt was granted,

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and I came to Struenſee, who received me very civilly, and gave me a long account of his former bad principles, (which, in ſhort, were nothing elſe but mere *materialiſmus* and *mechaniſmus*, according to the ſyſtem of *de la Mettrie* *) and told me, laſtly, what I was to tell Count Brandt. The contents of the meſſage were, that he was convinced, by the grace of God, and by reading the Bible, of the divine authority of the Scriptures; and that I might tell Count Brandt of this alteration of his, which, he hoped, would be agreeable to him. He added, which I ſhall mention in his own words,

" I confeſs that Brandt has ſpoken frequently to me about religion, but I always deſired him to keep ſilence on this head." By this I found, that what Brandt had told me concerning Struenſee was true †. I brought the meſſage I was charged with by Struenſee directly to Brandt. He rejoiced inwardly on account of this news,

* *De la Mettrie* died at Berlin in 1751. His famous book, *L'homme Machine*, makes man a mere machine, and his ſoul an inſignificant word. The powers of the ſoul he thinks to be nothing elſe but an unknown motion of the brain. His *Traité de la vie heureuſe*, contains the conſequences of this ſyſtem. He denies the immortality of the ſoul, laughs at all religion, and places all human happineſs in the enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures.

† See the foregoing Hiſtory of the Converſion of Count Struenſee, p. 79, 83.

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desired me to go to Struensee again, and tell him that it gave him great pleasure to hear that he had embraced truth, and that he begged of him to adhere to it to the last. He added: "Tell Struensee, on my part, that my own experience has now taught me, that true ease of mind is no where to be found, but in Christ crucified."—I carried this message back again to Struensee, who seemed to be much pleased at it.

As I kept no journal of the subjects of our many conferences, I shall not attempt a circumstantial detail of them. I had never an intention of publishing this, if the aforementioned reports had not forced me to it.

The Count would frequently mention how unhappy his former condition had been; how great reason he had to praise God's mercy that had saved his life at several times in most imminent dangers, that he might not perish for ever. He mentioned in particular one instance, when he, last summer, was thrown from his horse, taken up for dead, and laid four and twenty hours speechless. "Consider, said he, where my poor soul would have gone to, if death had snatched me away in the condition I was then in, for I was dead in sins; but God spared me that I might come into this condition, and that my soul may be saved.

I exhorted him to pray frequently: He ſaid, he did it very often, and looked upon it as a great mercy of God that he now conſidered it as his duty to pray: but, he ſaid, he muſt complain that his heart was often very cold, though he repented of his former way of life, and hoped for mercy upon no other foundation than Chriſt's redemption. When I had comforted him in a manner I thought proper, he then told me, that he, one evening, after a fervent prayer, had found a great eaſe of mind and comfort.

Towards the end of his life he declared, that during the time I had attended him, he had three different impediments to conquer, which he, at laſt, through the aſſiſtance of Chriſt, overcame. The firſt was, that it was hard for him to confeſs that he really was ſo great a ſinner as he afterwards did. The ſecond was, to follow my advice, and to own before thoſe that were about him the alteration of his ſentiments. The third was of ſuch a nature, that I dare not mention it, though it concerned his ſoul.—I found that theſe victories which he had gained over himſelf were not imaginary, but real ones: for he now was ready to open his heart, and to pour out what hitherto had lain concealed in it. He

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ſpoke without fear of his approaching death, and praiſed the inward aſſurance he enjoyed of being pardoned before God, and of which mercy he acknowledged himſelf to be unworthy. "What have I deſerved before God, ſaid he, but his eternal wrath?"

The time when his ſentence was to be given now drew near, but he appeared to be quite calm, for he was confident of the honeſty of his judges, and that they would act no otherwiſe than according to law and conſcience. I ſhewed him that he was very right in this reſpect, and that it was a proof of a Providence, that his judges were all ſuch men, whoſe knowledge of the law, and integrity of conſcience, would not permit them to deviate the leaſt from juſtice, and that he might be aſſured, his ſentence would be entirely agreeable to the tenor of the law. As much as he ſeemed to be reſigned to his fate, yet it appeared to me as if he ſtill entertained ſome hopes of ſaving his life. Perhaps this was owing to the common rumour, that Count Brandt would come off without loſing his life, which ſomebody had told him, and thereby revived the thought of eſcaping the ſcaffold. About four or five weeks before this, he was ſo full of the hopes of a pardon, that he felt a paroxyſm of his former levity and ambition,

which made him desire of the royal commission to have his fetters taken off in a solemn manner, and to propose to them some other strange requests. He himself, when I once took my leave of him, told me about it, and I did not chuse to give him a direct answer, because I looked upon it as an attack of his former levity and precipitation. However, when I came again, I reminded him of what he had told me, and asked him, how he could entertain any such thought, which betrayed so much of his attachment to the world? I desired him to give this up entirely, since he, in his present situation, should endeavour to disengage himself from all worldly things. He took this advice not at all amiss, but owned, that the thought he had entertained was produced by his levity, to which fault he was so much addicted, that he believed there were not ten people in the world equally so with himself. I looked upon this confession, and the manner in which he took what I had said, as a proof of the sincerity of his heart and his repentance. I told him likewise, on this occasion, how little foundation he had for entertaining any hopes of saving his life; that his crimes were then indeed not publicly known, but that there was a public rumor in what they consisted; and in case, said I, you should save your life, the greatest mercy that could be shewn to

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you, would be the changing of your dead warrant into impriſonment for life; and I deſired him to conſider which he ſhould prefer. He anſwered, "That if God ſhould foreſee that, in caſe his life was ſaved, he ſhould be carried away again by vanity and ſin, he would pray of him not to ſpare his life, but rather let him die; for it would be infinitely better for him to enter into a happy eternity and to be with Chriſt, than to become again a ſlave of ſin, and to loſe in this manner everlaſting happineſs." He repeated this declaration, at the very time when he expected his ſentence, in ſuch expreſſions which proved that the victory of grace and of faith was now become greater than before; for he ſaid, his prayers were now always after the manner in which Chriſt prayed; "Not my will, but thine be done." "In caſe, ſaid he, it cannot be otherwiſe, and I cannot eſcape death, I leave this world fully perſuaded that this is the will of God, who ſees that I might be carried away again by the world, and, therefore, in mercy to me will prevent this."

I went to him on the 24th of April, the day when he was to receive his ſentence. I found him lying upon his bed, and more thoughtful than common; but he got up directly, and I began to ſpeak to him in a comforting manner,

that he had no reaſon to be fearful of his ſentence in this world, ſince he knew his judgment in that which is to come, namely, a full pardon before God through Chriſt his Redeemer. He then, after ſome further converſation, promiſed that he would make himſelf eaſy and wait compoſedly for the will of God.

I heard the next day that ſentence was not only given, but that it was alſo believed that the King would entirely confirm it. I therefore went to him, and found him, though he was fully informed of the manner of his death, as compoſed and calm as I had left him. I ſpoke ſeveral things that could afford him comfort, and he heard all that I ſaid with pleaſure, and aſked me afterwards whether I had read his ſentence? I told him, I had not, and knew no more of it than what the common report was. He then took a copy of the ſentence out of the drawer of a table which ſtood next to him. When I had read it, I ſaid many things to comfort him; and he ſeemed quite compoſed; and as he now had given over all hopes of ſaving his life, he reſigned himſelf entirely to his fate, and ſeemed to be ſo full of his future happineſs that I could not help admiring his peace of mind, which God had granted to him whoſe

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ſins had been ſo great. He himſelf was ſenſible of this, for he derived from this grace of God, not only his tranquillity of mind but even his health. For when he enjoyed his liberty, he frequently was not well, but during the long time of his impriſonment, though he could ſcarcely ſtir or move, he had a good appetite, and ſlept well. He aſked me then what day his execution would take place, for he had heard that it was fixed for Thurſday the 30th of April. I told him that I was in this reſpect as uninformed as he himſelf was; and the time of his departure muſt be equally the ſame to him, if he only knew he was ready.

The following day, which was Sunday, April the 26th, I received, juſt when I came from church, a letter from Biſhop Harboe, wherein I was acquainted with the King's pleaſure, that both the ſtate-priſoners ſhould be executed on Tueſday next, April the 28th, and that I was accordingly to regulate my affairs in regard to Count Brandt. This news put my mind into a great emotion: I haſtened ſoon to the poor Count. When I came to the caſtle, I enquired of the commander, whether Brandt knew that his end was

ſo near. He anſwered, he did not, and he himſelf knew nothing of it, but thought he ſhould receive orders for it that very evening; which was the caſe. I therefore myſelf was to acquaint him with this melancholy news, and I did it in the following manner. Since I came to him to day rather earlier than uſual, I told him I ſhould make the beſt of his time ſince it was ſo ſhort. He gueſſed from what I ſaid that I knew the time of his execution, and aſked when it was to be? I told him it was the day after to-morrow, when he ſhould be delivered from all evil. He heard it unconcerned, and ſaid he readily ſubmitted to the will of God. I then prepared him for receiving the ſacrament, after which I took my leave.

I came on Monday about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and when I had ſpoke to him about the ſacrament, I made a propoſal to him, which I left to himſelf either to accept or not. I ſaid, he knew how many bad reports were ſpread of his behaviour during the time of his impriſonment; I therefore left it to him to conſider whether it might not be of uſe to make a declaration before proper witneſſes, what his real ſentiments were. He readily complied with the propoſal, and I went to the commander of

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the caſtle, who came with four gentlemen officers more, in whoſe preſence he declared, that he was ready to die and was not afraid of it; he likewiſe confeſſed before the All-knowing God, that he without hypocriſy had ſought for God's mercy; he likewiſe confeſſed, as he had done before, that he had acted very inconſiderately, that his levity had been very great, and that he, on this account, acknowledged God's mercy, in ſuffering him to die, leſt he ſhould be drawn away again from religion. He ſaid, he knew very well, that the ſame levity of temper had induced him, in the beginning of his impriſonment, to talk in a manner he was now aſhamed of; though he was ſure in his conſcience that many untruths were invented and propagated among the people; but he forgave thoſe who had been guilty of ſuch a thing. Now he wiſhed that thoſe gentlemen that were preſent would bear teſtimony to what he ſhould ſay. He then acknowledged himſelf a great ſinner before God, a ſinner who had gone aſtray, but was brought back by Chriſt. He then begged the commander and the other officers to forgive him, if by his levity he had offended any one of them, and wiſhed that God's mercy in Chriſt might always attend them as the greateſt bleſſing. He ſpoke all this with ſuch a readineſs

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and in ſo moving terms, that all who were preſent were affected by it, and every one of them wiſhed that God would preſerve him in this ſituation of mind to the laſt. When the gentlemen were gone, I adminiſtered the ſacrament to him, and he appeared as penitent and as devout as I have at any time ſeen any chriſtian whatever. When I approached to give him the ſacrament, he turned in the chair as if he would face me, and I, thinking he meant only to make it more commodious to me to give it him, deſired him to ſit ſtill; but he ſaid, "He would try to kneel down," which he did, and received the ſacrament with ſo many tears and with ſuch ſigns of inward hope, that I could not help being greatly affected.

I left him about noon, but came again in the afternoon, when I found him quite compoſed without any fear of death. I ſpent all the time I was with him in devotion, and left him late in the evening.

On Tueſday the 28th of April, which was the day of his execution, and as I firmly believed of his entrance into the bliſs of eternity, I came to him early in the morning, about ſix o'clock.

o'clock. I aſked him directly how he did, and how he had reſted that night. He ſaid, "He was very well, and had reſted well." I anſwered, I was glad to hear it, for if the body had had its reſt, his ſoul would be the more ſerene to enter upon its journey. He prayed a long while in my preſence very fervently. He ſhewed himſelf in his expreſſions a humble and penitent ſinner, but at the ſame time one who entertains the ſureſt hopes of being pardoned before God. He prayed for the church of Chriſt, for the King and the nation, for all that were miſled by error and irreligion. Laſtly, he prayed to God to forgive him all that whereby he had offended others, and expreſſed how readily he forgave thoſe that were his enemies. He thanked God for all the mercies he had ſhewn him during the time of his impriſonment; he prayed for me likewiſe. Then he read the Lord's prayer with much attention, adding now and then an explanation to what he had been reading, inſomuch that I was amazed to ſee how great his preſence of mind was when he was juſt going to die. When he was pronouncing the words, 'Thy kingdom come,' he added: "Yes, now it is coming." When he read, 'Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt

againſt us,' He added: " Thou O God and my Redeemer, who knoweſt my own heart and that of all men, thou knoweſt how free my heart is from all hatred and malice againſt any perſon whatever, and that I wiſh well to every body in this and the future world."

When he had finiſhed his prayers, his chains, which were fixed in the wall, were taken off, and he put thoſe clothes on in which he intended to appear on the ſcaffold. He then drank a diſh of coffee and eat ſomething, walking up and down in the room, which he could not do before. As often as I aſked him how he found himſelf, he ſaid, he was not afraid of dying. He afterwards aſked me, whether I had ſeen any body executed before, and how far he was to lay his body bare for execution?

Soon after, the door of the priſon was opened, and an officer deſired me to get into a coach that was to carry me before him to the place of execution. I then recommended him to the mercy of God, who was ready and powerful to ſtrengthen to the laſt. He then embraced me, and we parted, till we met again at the place of execution.

When

When I received him there, I comforted him, and ſaid, among other words, that Chriſt would not leave him. Upon which he anſwered: "He has been with me all the way hither." We then went up the ſtairs to the ſcaffold. Even here, he aſſured me his mind was compoſed, and he was not afraid of death. I ſpoke ſeveral things after his ſentence was read to him, and his coat of arms broken. And when I happened to quote the words, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee,' he ſaid: "Yes, they all are caſt into the depths of the ſea."

When I had read thoſe things from the ritual which are uſual on ſuch occaſions, and had aſked him, if he acknowledged the juſtice of his ſentence? and when he had anſwered, "Yes," he then began to pray that God would bleſs the King and the whole land for Chriſt's ſake. Several prayers being offered up on my part, I gave him the benediction, and taking him by the hand, delivered him up to juſtice. He quickly pulled his clothes off, laid himſelf down, and when his head was already upon the block, and I reminded him of Jeſus falling on his face in Gethſemane praying, he

ſaid: " The blood of Chriſt interceedeth for me." Whilſt I was ſaying: ' O Chriſt, in thee I live, in thee I die; O thou Lamb of God that takeſt away the ſins of the world, be merciful,' he ſuffered his puniſhment.

*Two anonymous* LETTERS *to Count* BRANDT, *which were found in the pocket-book which he uſed always to carry about him, wherein he was forewarned of what happened to him many months after.*

* * * * *

Sir,

" Perhaps you may wonder to receive a letter without a name on a matter of ſo great importance, from a friend who formerly uſed to tell you the truth before your face; but the times we live in now, will not juſtify a man in expoſing himſelf to danger, without ſeeing any good ariſing from it.

The two laſt court-days, I ſought for an opportunity at Hirſchholm to ſpeak a few words to you in private; but I found it was impoſſible. You might have obſerved this, if you had been at all attentive; but I found you ſo much engaged with another object, that I could not approach

approach you near enough to make you underſtand what I wanted: and I thought it not adviſable to go to Hirſchholm on purpoſe to pay you a viſit.

Once, Sir, you ſhewed that you had the honour of your maſter at heart. It was then aſſerted, that neither zeal nor attachment were the ſprings of your actions, but ambition and intereſt, becauſe you hoped that if you could bring into diſgrace Count H—— you might ſucceed him in that favour and honour he enjoyed. However, the bulk of the people thought your intentions noble and without ſelf-intereſt. Perhaps the immediate conſequences of this your tranſaction have made ſo great an impreſſion upon you, that you think you dare not venture upon ſuch another. And yet the final iſſue of the affair has ſhewn, that even your ill ſucceſs in it has been more advantageous to you than detrimental. Therefore, Sir, do not think that this was the mere effect of accident, but rather that a higher hand has guided this matter. I do not know what your notions of God may be, or whether you believe a God at all, or only a mere Stoic fate. It would be very ſuperfluous to debate a matter of ſo great importance here. Time will come, when experience will

will teach you that there is a God, who ſees and knows every thing, who either early or late rewards virtue and puniſhes vice.

My intention is not at preſent to make you a chriſtian. It is only to remind you of your duty, that duty, which even an honeſt heathen thought himſelf obliged to, towards his King, his country, himſelf and his family. The heathen laws demanded this of every ſubject and of every man who laid any claim to honour.

You ſee, Sir, in what manner your King and benefactor is uſed. You ſee the indecent things that are done before his eyes, and in which you yourſelf are too much concerned. You ſee that in the whole kingdom every thing is turned upſide down. Conſider, Sir, and recover your ſenſes, and you will not be at a loſs how to act. If it is true, (and it is but too true) that the life of the King is in danger, or at leaſt, that preparations are making to take away his liberty; you certainly muſt know it. The ſenſe of the nation on this head cannot be unknown to you, and that one time or other you are to account for the life and liberty of your Sovereign. You, Sir, ſince you are conſtantly about him,

and

and ſince you ſee and know of every thing; be aſſured that your head will be anſwerable for it either ſooner or later. Think of your own ſafety, I conjure you by the friendſhip I entertain for you. It is in your power to do it. You ſee plainly from the deſire of the King to avoid the place and company in which he is ill-uſed, and from his averſion to return to it, that he is ſenſible of the ill-treatment. He one time or another will deliver himſelf from you, or good fortune will rid him of you, and what will then be your fate? Would it not be beſt for you, to ſave your head, and to do at the ſame time your duty? To build your happineſs on a ſolid and noble foundation, which you then will owe to your zeal, your faithfulneſs and attachment to your King, who will reward you with riches and honour, and the nation will not think even this an equivalent for your ſervices. You and your preſent welfare depends on the caprice of a wretch who will abandon you as ſoon as he is above your aſſiſtance. At preſent he makes uſe of you as the monkey did of the cat, and I fancy you have found this out more than once if you will not impoſe upon yourſelf.

If the King ſhould come to town, I adviſe you to act in this manner. Prevail upon him

to go to the palace, and perſuade him to call for one or two of his faithful ſervants to conſult in what manner to proceed. It is unfortunate enough that the number of theſe faithful ſervants is ſo ſmall, and reduced perhaps to one or two perſons; for the beſt and cleverest men are carefully removed. You will eaſily gueſs who theſe perſons are without my naming them. Perſeverance, honeſty, and experience are characteriſtics by which you are to know them. I could name them, but I would avoid the leaſt ſuſpicion of ſelf-intereſt. However, I muſt tell you, that it is neither ——— nor ———; both are deteſted by the nation to an equal degree. You will forfeit your head if you do not follow this advice, which I give you as your friend, and a faithful ſervant of the King. If you do not mind it, but neglect your duty towards your King and benefactor, you may be ſure it will coſt you your life, your honour, and every thing which is deareſt to an honeſt man, and beſides no body will pity you. If you, on the other ſide, do what your duty requires, and ſave your King from thoſe wicked hands he is fallen into, you may be ſure that there is no honour or proſperity to which you would not be entitled to, and this with conſent of the King and all his faithful ſubjects.

Perhaps

Perhaps you will think proper to ſhew this letter to your Struenſee, to give him a proof of your faithfulneſs, at the expence of thoſe obligations you have ſworn to your King, and to induce him to grant new favours to the huſband of Lady ——— ; and perhaps he might do it, to deceive you, and to keep you in his intereſt. But I aſſure you that if they have got rid of the King, you will be wretched, and perhaps the guilt will fall upon you.

I repeat it again, your head ſhall anſwer for the ſafety of the King. You are continually about him, you accompany him, you are intruſted with his perſon. And leſt you may plead ignorance, I aſſure you upon honour, that in ſuch caſe, the copy of this letter ſhall be produced againſt you in proper time and place. And for fear you ſhould miſtake in this reſpect, I deſire you to mind the ſeal of this letter, which contains the initial letters of my name, and which will alſo be produced againſt you.

The life and health of the King, together with the welfare of the kingdom, are in your hands; act in a manner that you can anſwer for before your fellow-citizens, I will not ſay before God, (for I do not know what your idea

of God may be, though I have reaſon to think, from what you told me once in your apartments at Chriſtianſburg, and afterwards at Hirſchholm, that your notions are not altogether as they ſhould be.)

You ſee I am not afraid of your gueſſing who I am, and I aſſure you, that if you act as I expect from your birth, you will find me to be your faithful and devoted ſervant."

*July* the 8th, 1771.

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" Well, Sir, what I foretold you has happened, and you feel already the effects of your bad conduct. You have been faithleſs to your King, and you are now treated by others in the ſame manner. They uſe you as the monkey did the cat. You are deceived, and ſince they find they can do with you whatever they pleaſe, they laugh at you now, and it will not laſt long before they will ſend you with contempt about your buſineſs; and leſt you ſhould tell tales, they very likely may impriſon you for life, or ſend you, by ſome means or other, into another world. This will be the due reward of your treachery, cowardice, and your mean actions. I prognoſticated all theſe things to you in my laſt letter of July the 8th: ſince that time, my friendſhip for you, of which I have

I have given you undeniable proofs, is grown very cool; you do not deſerve that it ſhould continue, ſince you have been unable to follow good advice, and to do what your honour and your duty requires of you; you rather have choſen to perſevere in your wicked way of life. If you, at that time, had followed my advice, you would have ſet the King at liberty by ſaving him, and your praiſe would have been immortal: you then would have ſatisfied the duties of a good ſubject, of a faithful ſervant, and of an honeſt man: you would have gained the applauſe, not only of all your countrymen, but even of all Europe: they would all have united to procure you rewards according to your merit, and proportionable to the ſervices done to the King and your country. And certainly nobody would have been more deſerving of rewards. But now you are deteſted through the whole kingdom, and every where you are laughed at. Much was expected from your loyalty, your love for the King, and from a ſenſe of your own duty; but people were miſtaken. You are now puniſhed; you are infamous among the whole nation, and your name is mentioned with horror. At court you are laughed at, and entertained with vain hopes; an imaginary greatneſs is ſhewn you, you are tickled with the empty title of Count, which will remain a monument of

your want of faith, your weakneſs, your meanneſs, and your reproachful conduct. In the mean time Struenſee inſults the King and the whole royal family, not becauſe they had offended him, but only to ſhew his unlimited power. He arrogates all honours to himſelf; he makes himſelf maſter of the government, the concerns of the kingdom, and of the King himſelf, whom he diſhonours before the whole world; he diſpoſes of the revenues of the kingdom in a deſpotic manner, and againſt all order. This wretch durſt attempt to put himſelf on a level with his maſter, by drawing up an order, by which the ſigning of his name obtains the ſame authority, which, according to the conſtitution of the kingdom, only belongs to the ſignature of the King. Your meanneſs, and your unwarrantable conduct, have aſſiſted to raiſe him ſo high; you could have prevented this, and therefore you will be anſwerable for the conſequences. He commits crimes, and aſſaſſinations, and he does it to keep the reins of government; but you contribute your ſhare, by obeying the orders of this Cromwell, who is ready to ſacrifice the life of the King a thouſand times over, if poſſible, that he may obtain his wicked ends, and provide for his own ſecurity. Inſtead of acquainting the King with things which nobody knows better than you, (for you are cunning

enough

enough when it concerns your own intereſt) you aſſiſt this *Dick leat the buſh* in arrogating to himſelf royal authority; in keeping his maſter under guardianſhip; in degrading him in the eyes of his ſubjects, that their love may ceaſe, or at leaſt decreaſe; and laſtly, as every one ſays, in uſing him perſonally ill in the bargain.

You that can prevent all this, and ſave the King from the hands of this good-for-nothing wretch, and yet are not willing to do it, you, Sir, are accountable for it, and you deſerve greater puniſhment than the traitor himſelf: and believe me, as ſure as that there is a God, you ſooner or later, ſhall pay for it with your head.

You ſee how prepoſterouſly buſineſs is tranſacted; every thing is overthrown and jumbled together in the moſt ſtrange manner, and blended with the higheſt inconſiderateneſs, of which there is no parallel inſtance to be met with in hiſtory. The moſt honeſt people that have ſerved the kingdom ſuch a long while and ſo faithfully that even envy itſelf could not blame them, are removed at a diſtance: they are turned way in the moſt ſhameful manner, if they will not fall in with the meaſures of this *Doctor of phyſic*, or if he is afraid of their honeſty. Their places are filled up with wretches who know nothing of the conſtitution of the kingdom and of the ſituation of affairs;

who know nothing of the buſineſs annexed to their offices; in ſhort, people of whom nobody ſo much as dreamt that they were acquainted even with the firſt principles of the art of government.

For God's ſake! what is the meaning that a ——— and ———, profeſſor of mathematics at Ligniz, is placed at the head of the board of finances? Theſe men enjoy a yearly ſalary of 3000 rixdollars, whilſt others that have ſerved forty or fifty years without blame, are now ſtarving, becauſe they could not betray the King and their country, and would not be employed in promoting bad and deſtructive ends. Yet theſe ignorant men dare to take upon their ſhoulders a burden under which, particularly in theſe unhappy times, a man of courage, abilities, and experience would have trembled. However, the wiſe man knows the danger, and therefore will not hazard the welfare of the nation and his good character; but the ignorant man who has nothing to loſe, does not perceive the unhappy conſequences of his inability and ignorance.

You ſee, Sir, that the nation is acquainted with the wretchedneſs of this preſent adminiſtration, that it feels the bad conſequences of it, which will drive it at laſt to extremities. You may be aſſured of the truth of this the more, ſince diſ-

content

content diſcovers itſelf in a public and an alarming manner. You know all this, but you conceal it from the King, though you are the only man that converſes with the King, whilſt acceſs to the throne is denied to all the reſt of his ſubjects. You alone can inform the King of the dangerous ſituation he himſelf and his kingdoms are in. The inconceivable indifference wherewith the beſt and braveſt of the King's ſubjects are treated, ſhews that a certain kingdom (Norway) may ſoon become alienated; ſo that, in a ſhort time, every thing may be loſt without help, if his Majeſty continues to hearken to ſuch bad advice.

You ſee, Sir, how the department of foreign affairs is managed, and how, by the intrigues and incapacity of our *great prime miniſter*, who has the audacity to interfere, every thing is perplexed, ſo that the name of the Danes is now a ſubject for ridicule.

You ſee, Sir, and you know, how arbitrarily his *excellency our great prime miniſter*, *Count Struenſee*, diſpoſes of the finances—the pure blood of the poor ſubjects.

You, Sir, as you are a Dane, of noble extraction, beloved by your King, to whom you

and

and your family owe ſo many favours; and yet for you to keep ſilence!—Do not you bluſh? and are you not convinced in your conſcience, that you yourſelf ought to fall the firſt ſacrifice of ſuch conduct, ſince you might have prevented all this, or had, at leaſt, a thouſand opportunities to ſet things to rights again?

If tumult and rebellion (which God forbid) ſhould be the conſequences, of whom do you think the exaſperated populace would take hold firſt? Would not they ſecure you firſt, ſince you are, at leaſt, as culpable as Struenſee? And do not you expoſe your life, ſooner or later, to the greateſt danger by this conduct, which is not conſiſtent with the character of an honeſt man?

Reflect, Sir, and return to your duty: I conjure you by the aſhes of your father, whom you never knew; by the tears of your virtuous mother, who weeps, perhaps, already on account of your approaching untimely death; and what is ſtill more, I conjure you by the tears, which, perhaps, one time may be ſhed, on your account, by the King, the royal family, and your afflicted country.

You are not afraid to diſagree with the *Doctor-prime-miniſter* when it concerns your private intereſt;

reſt; but you are mean enough to be reconciled by a preſent of 10,000 rixdollars, of which he has robbed the King and the nation to give them to you. Are you not aſhamed of ſuch a meanneſs? and are you afraid of this man in matters that concern the welfare of your King and your country? Theſe traitors and villains, who defend a bad cauſe, would not have courage to oppoſe you, through fear of endangering their heads, which already ſit looſely upon their ſhoulders. You would ſave your King and your country; you would deſerve rewards, and would have a right to claim them; they would follow you of courſe, ſince nobody would refuſe them: I myſelf, who write this letter, would be the firſt that would contribute largely towards loading you with riches. With what tranquillity and inward ſatisfaction would you enjoy your fortune, your prerogatives, and your honour, if you ſhould gain this by the conſent, and even agreeably to the wiſhes of your King, your country, and your fellow citizens. I deſire you, Sir, to conſider this well, though I entertain a better opinion of your generoſity, than to ſuppoſe that you are to be inſtigated to perform noble actions only by mercenary motives.

In my opinion you muſt begin this important buſineſs in the following manner. You are frequently alone with the King: you take a walk in the

the evening with the King, as I was informed laſt Wedneſday at Hirſchholm: you have found that the King is weary of the guardianſhip he is kept under. Make uſe, Sir, of ſuch a favorable moment, or occaſion it yourſelf, ſince you have underſtanding enough for it. Repreſent to him the unhappy ſituation he is in, and how inconſiſtent it is with thoſe obligations his royal dignity lays him under. Tell him that he, by ſigning the order of the 15th of July, has divided the throne and his royal authority between himſelf and Struenſee; that he himſelf, the royal family, the kingdom, all his ſubjects, his revenues, the life and the property of every one, are left to the arbitrary diſpoſal of this *arch-grand-vizir*, who is a man without experience, without honour, without religion, without fidelity; who does not regard laws, who is maſter over all, even over the life of the King. You know that great crimes are oftentimes productive of ſtill greater ones, or that we at leaſt muſt fear that it might happen. When you have explained this to the King, then repreſent to him the deſpair his ſubjects are in, and to what they might be driven by ſuch a deſtructive adminiſtration, and by ſuch miſery. Shew him what danger threatens him and his empire, if this wretch has time enough to turn every thing upſide down. If you ſhould put the heart of the King in emotion, and ſhould

have convinced him, how abſolutely neceſſary it was, to think of the preſervation of his royal perſon, his family, and his kingdom; then propoſe to him to go directly to Copenhagen, where he will be quite ſafe; to reſort to the palace, and to ſend for two or three noblemen that can give good advice, according as the circumſtances require; that he might not take falſe ſteps (which could be of conſequence) at the time when the nation ſhould attempt to revenge itſelf, and to ſhew its hatred againſt the authors of its misfortunes and its miſeries. I could name theſe perſons, but the nation will do it for me; they ought to be perſons acquainted with government, that they may adviſe according as the preſent ſituation of affairs requires: but it muſt not be ———, nor ———, nor ———, for theſe three the nation equally deteſts, and they, therefore, would fruſtrate the whole deſign.

For God's, your King's, your country's, your family's, your own ſake, conſider all this well, and do not delay any longer to haſten to the aſſiſtance of your unhappy country. Save the nation, the King, and your own head.

*September* the 19th, 1771.

## *The Sentence of Count* ENEVOLD BRANDT, *at full length.*

IT appears, from Count Brandt's own confeſſion, as well as from the declaration of the late prime miniſter, John Frederick Struenſee, and from other circumſtances, that Count Enevold Brandt was not only Struenſee's very good friend, but even his intimate, whom he intruſted with his greateſt ſecrets.

Therefore, in conſideration of the royal favour and intimacy which he enjoyed, it would have been his duty to endeavour, by all means, to remove thoſe things, of which he, according to his own declaration in his trial, diſapproved in the conduct, ſentiments, and tranſactions of Struenſee, and which he muſt have found fooliſh, audacious, and detrimental both to the King, the adminiſtration, and the whole empire.

Inſtead of this, he, as a criminal ſubject and ſervant of the King, unworthy of his truſt, has acted in concert with Struenſee, and has not left off to be his intimate, and to aſſiſt him.

He ſuffered himſelf to be employed by Struenſee to keep every body from ſpeaking to the King, leſt his Majeſty ſhould be informed of what was blameable in Struenſee's conduct, in which he himſelf was ſo deeply concerned.

He

He has behaved, not only in private, but even publicly, to the great concern of his fellow ſubjects, inſolently, and without any reſpect towards his King.

He has not ſhewn that reverence to his Majeſty which every good ſubject thinks his duty, and expreſſes readily from his heart on all occaſions, in his words and actions: he rather has oppoſed the King, that he might gain and keep Struenſee's favour, to obtain an extravagant fortune, and ſerve his own private intereſt.

His memoir, which is a kind of correſpondence between him and Struenſee, is a proof of his abſurd pretenſions, and that he acknowledged his blameable behaviour towards the King. Therefore he ſhould have altered and amended his conduct, and rather have quitted a poſt that he held, which he diſliked, and for which he was not qualified. But no! he would not act contrary to the will of his benefactor and protector Struenſee, who wanted him, for his own purpoſes, to be about the King's perſon; and Count Brandt, on his part, expected to be rewarded by his friend with greater honours and riches.

He in his department as *directeur des ſpectacles*, has aſſiſted Struenſee, to bring about a miſunderſtanding in the royal family, by aſſigning to Prince Frederick a ſeparate box in the play-

houſe, leſt his Royal Highneſs ſhould have an opportunity, by being in the ſame box with the King, to acquaint him with Count Brandt's and his intimate friend's moſt blameable conduct.

He has prevailed upon Struenſee to make him, within a ſhort time, preſents out of the King's treaſury to the amount of 60,000 rix-dollars, though he was convinced, he neither for his ſervices nor for his conduct deſerved ſuch a reward.

When he returned his thanks to his Majeſty for theſe great preſents, he did not mention the ſum, becauſe he was conſcious that he was undeſerving of it, and becauſe Struenſee had deſired him not to mention it, leſt the King ſhould get an inſight into that, which the approved of extracts of accounts have ſince clearly ſhewn to his Majeſty and every one who inſpects them.

All theſe criminal actions are perpetrated by Count Brandt, and his conſcience muſt alſo tell him every moment, that he acted as a faithleſs ſubject, and particularly againſt his duty and obligations on account of the eſpecial favour and confidence his Majeſty honoured him with: and beſides all this, he was ſo earneſtly and ſo ſenſibly put in mind of his duty in two

anonymous

anonymous letters, which were found in his pocket-book, and wherein he was adviſed concerning what he ought to have done, if he wiſhed to preſerve his head from the ſcaffold.

He was ruled and guided by nothing but inſolence, ambition and avarice.

Criminal as all theſe mentioned things are yet they are nothing in compariſon to what Count Enevold Brandt himſelf has confeſſed, clearly and plainly before the King's commiſſion, and what is proved and confirmed by ſeveral witneſſes; *That he has laid hands on the ſacred perſon of his Majeſty.* For it may be conſidered, as if he had attempted to kill his Majeſty, becauſe it cannot be foretold what the iſſue of ſuch an aſſault might be, and an unlucky blow on a tender part has frequently been the cauſe of death.

He was angry at the King, and wanted ſatisfaction of his royal maſter, whoſe well deſerved admonition he ſhould have received with repentance of his former behaviour towards him, and ſhould have avoided coming into his preſence, leſt he ſhould offend him again.

Inſtead of this, he planned with his friend Struenſee, how and when he could beſt aſſault his Majeſty, and conſidered by himſelf, what weapons he was to uſe, which he kept in readi-

neſs, though upon ſecond conſideration he did not make uſe of them.

Being told by Struenſee that the King was by himſelf, and that it was now time to put his deſign into execution, he conſiderately and with full intention to revenge himſelf, went to the King, turned the two pages that were in waiting out of the room, bolted the door, leſt any body ſhould come in to oppoſe him and to prevent his deſign, and forced his Majeſty by words and by an aſſault to make reſiſtance.

He wounded the King in this ſcuffle on the neck, and abuſed his benefactor and his King with words and expreſſions ſo ſhocking and rebellious, that every body muſt forbear repeating them.

Though Count Brandt has ſaid in his defence, that his Majeſty had forgiven him this; yet, ſuppoſe it were ſo, it cannot be underſtood otherwiſe, than that his Majeſty would forbear puniſhing ſo great a crime for a while. This indulgence does not juſtify him, and his Majeſty muſt know beſt how far it ſhould extend itſelf.

This deteſtable and traiterous action of Count Brandt, cannot be conſidered otherwiſe than as an open attempt upon the King's perſon, and cannot fall under any other denomination than

that

that of high-treaſon, which deſerves the puniſhment fixed upon ſuch a crime in the Daniſh code of laws, book vi. chap. 4. article 1.

We, therefore judging accordingly, think it to be juſt and right, that

Count Enevold Brandt ſhall have forfeited his honour, his life, and his eſtates; that he ſhall be degraded from his dignity as Count, and all other dignities which have been conferred upon him. His coat of arms which he had as Count, ſhall be broken by the executioner on the ſcaffold; likewiſe ſhall Count Enevold Brandt's right hand and afterwards his head be cut off when alive, his body ſhall be quartered and laid upon the wheel, and his head and his hand ſhall be ſtuck upon a pole.

Given by the King's commiſſion at the caſtle of Chriſtianſburg, *April* the 25th, 1772.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. K. Juel Wind. (L. S.) | G. A. Braem. (L. S.) | H. Stampe. (L. S.) |
| Luxdorph. (L. S.) | A. G. Carſtens. (L. S.) | Kofod Ancher. (L. S.) |
| I. E. E. Schmidt. (L. S.) | F. C. Sevel. (L. S.) | O. Guldberg. (L. S.) |

The approbation of the King is as follows.

We

We hereby approve in all points of the ſentence, pronounced by the commiſſion of enquiry which we had appointed at our caſtle of Chriſtianſburg, againſt Enevold Brandt, on account of his deteſtable and traiterous deſign and aſſault upon our own perſon, that he ſhall have forfeited his honour, life, and eſtate, ſhall be deprived of his dignity as Count, and all other dignities which have been conferred upon him, his coat of arms ſhall be broken by the executioner on the ſcaffold; that his right hand, and afterwards his head, ſhall be cut off when alive; his body ſhall be quartered and laid upon the wheel, and his head and his hand ſhall be ſtuck upon a pole. Whereupon thoſe whom it concerns are commanded to act accordingly.

Given at our caſtle of Chriſtianſburg, the 27th of *April*, 1772.

CHRISTIAN.

O. Tott

LUXDORPH. A. SCHUMACHER.
DONS. HOYER.

FINIS.

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